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Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 29 | Min 19 | Humidity 70% Partly cloudy Sensex 83,938 | Nifty 25,722 | Gold 1,23,000 | Silver 1,52,000 | Dollar 88.77 | Euro 102.03 | GBP 116.69

PAGE 3

Trash goes viral

Move to dump garbage at litterbugs' doorsteps has gone viral, but B'lureans say real issue is inefficient waste collection

PAGE 7

Bolt & beautiful

As more citizens put on their running shoes, we look at three clubs that have made fitness raves a raging trend

Wrong parking cases cross 6.33 lakh in Bengaluru, make up 16% of all traffic violations; expert says civic body too should keep parking space in mind before approving commercial building plans

PARKING SPACE JAM

Most violations are reported near hospitals, commercial complexes, and tech corridors

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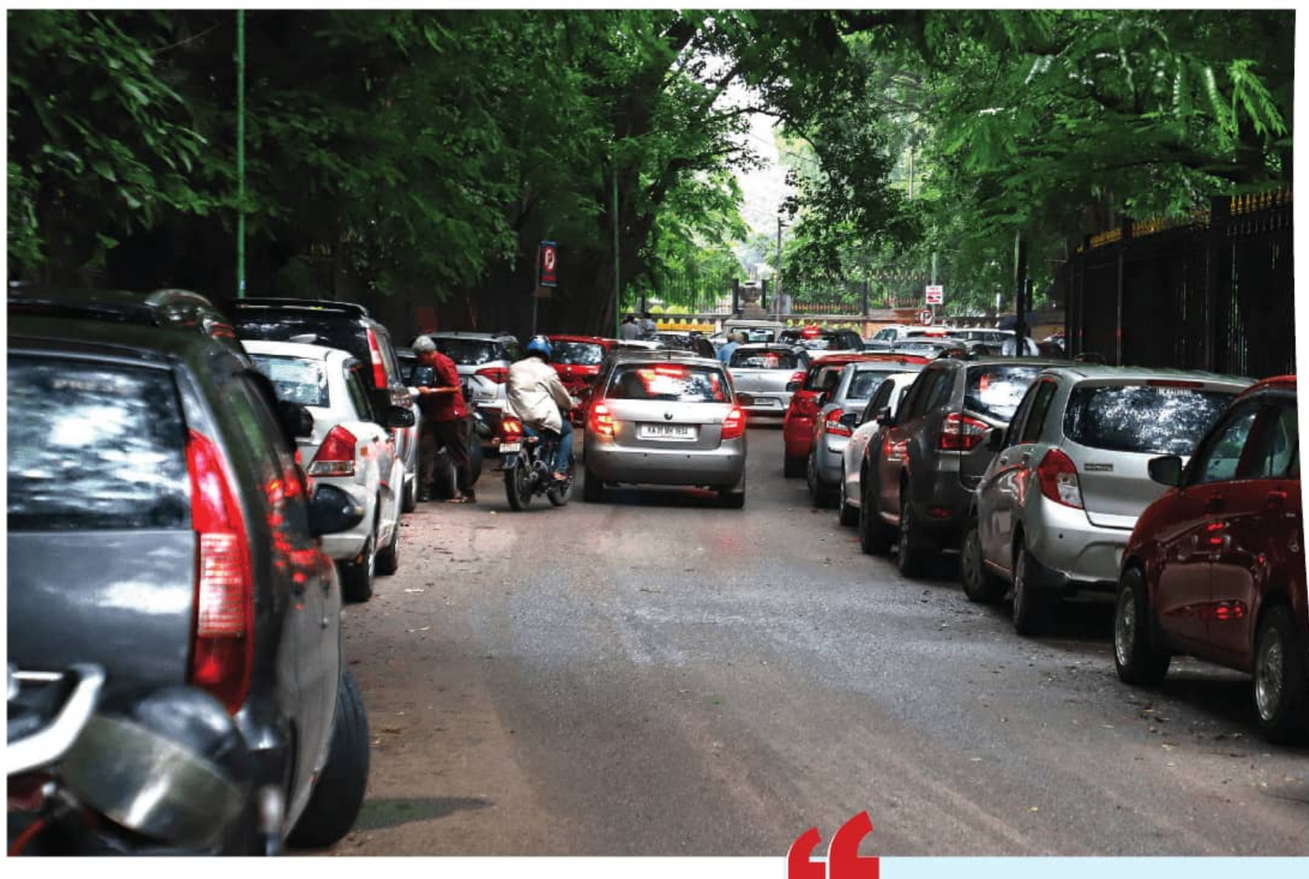

Wrong parking continues to remain one of the biggest challenges for the Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP), despite regular enforcement drives. According to official data, illegal parking accounts for 16% of all traffic violations recorded this year, making it the second-biggest contributor to traffic chaos in the city.

Traffic police records reveal that this year 6,33,676 cases of wrong parking have already been registered until September end across various traffic divisions in Bengaluru. Officials say the numbers highlight how deeply rooted the issue is, especially in commercial zones, narrow residential streets, and areas around metro stations where motorists frequently leave their vehicles unattended.

A senior traffic police officer said that enforcement is continuous. "Each traffic police official on the ground books at least 20 cases of wrong parking every single day and sometimes it goes upto 30 challans also. Many motorists ignore basic parking rules, leading to congestion, delays, and inconvenience to other road users," the officer added.

Wrongly parked vehicles often obstruct the free movement of traffic, forcing motorists to manoeuvre through narrow gaps and causing bottlenecks, especially during peak hours. Traffic expert MN Shree Hari explained that wrong parking is one of the most common traffic violations in Bengaluru. "Such violations continue to rise, whether people are aware of the rules or not and if there are signs or not, the violation will continue." He gave an example that visitors from outside the city or state may not be familiar with Bengaluru's traffic discipline, so expecting them to follow the norms without proper awareness is unrealistic. He stressed that unless strict

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"Each traffic police official on the ground books at least 20 cases of wrong parking every single day and sometimes it goes upto 30 challans also. Many motorists ignore basic parking rules, leading to congestion, delays, and inconvenience to other road users

—Traffic official

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Police officials conduct review meetings with banks, commercial establishments to ensure implementation of security measures against robbers

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The state is tightening vigil around banks, ATMs, and commercial establishments, after recent incidents of robbery. The Tumkur district police recently launched a series of review and coordination meetings following the recent directives issued by the Director General and Inspector General of Police (DG & IGP) Dr. MA Saleem.

The focus of the meeting was security of banks and microfinance institutions. All bank officials also participated in the meeting, along with higher police officials, and other senior officers.

This was similar to the security audits conducted by the Whitefield Division Police in coordination with bank managers and commercial establishment representatives to assess vulnerabilities and ensure that CCTV systems, alarms, and security guards are effectively deployed.

In a Varthur mobile shop burglary, it emerged that thieves had gained entry from the emergency exit. The investigation revealed that although CCTV cameras were installed, the security guard at the rear entry was absent at the time of the crime.

"The shop had a security alarm, but at the time the manager was at home asleep with his phone left outside, so the alarm alert did not reach

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

THINGS TO DO

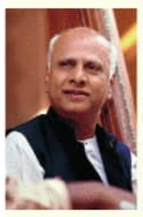
01 Growth reimagined

The British Council launches a two-day event uniting Indian and UK leaders in arts, culture, and enterprise. Panels, performances, and a marketplace highlight creative collaborations and future economic opportunities. **Where: Bangalore International Centre, Domlur; When: November 5 to 6**

02 Games kickoff

The 4th Mini Karnataka Games 2025 will be inaugurated at Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will lead the inauguration, with dignitaries including Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, Minister Ramalinga Reddy, and MLA Rizwan Arshad in attendance. **Where: Sree Kanteerava Indoor Stadium, Kasturba Road; When: November 2, 5 pm**

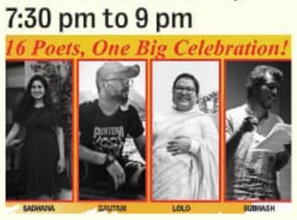
03 Musical tribute



Suran Mein Ras Tum Ho" honours Pandit CR Vyas's legacy with a concert. Acclaimed vocalists will perform select bandishes, accompanied by tabla, harmonium, and chorus, while his son Shashi Vyas shares personal reflections on the maestro's life and music. **Where: Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Malleswaram; When: November 8, 7 pm onwards**

04 Poetry gala

Urban Solace marks its 16th anniversary with a four-week poetry special in Bengaluru. The first edition features four top poets — Sadhana Subramanian, Gautam Krishnan, Lolo, and Subhash — celebrating the city's vibrant literary scene. **Where: Urban Solace, Ulsoor; When: November 4, 7:30 pm to 9 pm**



05 Cinematic exchange

The European Union Film Festival celebrates 30 years of Indo-European cultural collaboration in Bengaluru. Audiences can experience 24 contemporary European films in 25 languages, offering a rich showcase of Europe's stories and spirit. **Where: Suchitra Film Society, Banashankari; When: November 7 to 15**

Post-Deepavali air quality woes hit citizens hard

Sudden spike in post-festival air pollution is causing widespread coughs, wheezing, and asthma, affecting children, elderly, and chronic illness patients

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The days following Deepavali have once again led to a surge in respiratory illnesses in Bengaluru.

City hospitals report an increase in the number of patients presenting with symptoms of various respiratory illnesses. According to healthcare experts, this is mainly due to deteriorating air quality from firecrackers during the festival.

"Over the past few weeks, we have noticed an increase in patients with respiratory illnesses such as allergies, bronchitis, bronchial asthma, COPD, interstitial lung disease, etc., mainly due to worsening air quality following Deepavali (burning of crackers). Some are showing severe symptoms, requiring hospitalisation. Many are being treated with nebulisers," said Dr Pavan Yadav, Lead Consultant & Lung Transplantation, Aster RV Hospital.

These patients span all age groups, with a higher number of elderly individuals facing health issues. Doctors report that these patients mainly suffer from symptoms such as wheezing, persistent cough, nasal and throat irritation, and watery eyes.

"We are seeing children with wheezing but no infectious cause, suggesting that pollutants or allergens in the air might be responsible. We are also witnessing prolonged coughs and colds beyond the usual duration. It is more common in children under two years of age," said Dr Anupam Jaiswal, Consultant Paediatric Intensivist & Paediatrician, Rainbow Children's Hospital, Bannerghatta.

PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

Patients struggle with breathing after Deepavali smoke

Pulmonologists say the sudden spike in air pollution and suspended dust particles from the bursting of firecrackers is considered the main culprit. Additionally, temperature drops and intermittent rains this year due to cyclonic effects further irritate the airways and lower immunity. Seasonal viral infections are also common, compounding respiratory discomfort. Moreover, increased tree pollen and fungal spores, which multiply in humid conditions, lead to heightened allergic reactions.

Age groups such as children below five to six years and adults over 65, particularly those with pre-existing health issues—lung conditions such as asthma, COPD, or other chronic respiratory diseases—are especially vulnerable during this period.

"Additionally, those with uncontrolled diabetes, heart disease, or other comorbidities such as kidney and liver disorders are more prone to developing complications or severe respiratory symptoms when exposed to increased pollution, infections, and allergens after Deepavali," said Dr Sachin Kumar, Director – Pulmonology & Critical Care Medicine, Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru.

According to healthcare experts, practising good respiratory hygiene goes a long way in protecting our respiratory health. When stepping outside, wear an N95 mask, as it helps filter out most of the harmful particles in the air. However, indoor air quality is equally important. Using an air purifier with a HEPA filter, avoiding incense sticks and candles, and keeping windows open when pollution levels are lower can all help improve air quality inside our homes.

Firecracker smoke, pollen, and fungal spores are combining to worsen respiratory discomfort. Children under five and older adults are particularly susceptible, with specialists urging masks, inhalers, and air purifiers to reduce exposure

"People with chronic breathing problems should always keep their inhalers nearby and adhere to their prescribed treatment plans. Therefore, receiving yearly flu and pneumococcal vaccines becomes important, especially for those with pre-existing conditions and children. The increase in pollution due to vehicles, industrial areas, pollen, and other factors can weaken the lungs, making infections easier to contract," added Dr Kumar.

Meraki dazzles with art and laser magic

This year's Meraki – The Love and Soul of Art, Season 3 at St Joseph's Boys' High School was a vibrant celebration of creativity, imagination, and artistic expression, showcasing the exceptional talents of students, parents, and teachers. Visitors enjoyed a day filled with workshops, live counters, games, performing arts, food stalls, and fun. The main attraction was the spectacular laser show. The exhibition featured celebrity guests, performing arts, and interactive experiences, promising a wholesome artistic fiesta for all age groups. **— BMB**

Preparing Kannada for the Age of Artificial Intelligence: CM

The Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced that the Karnataka government is committed to ensuring that Artificial Intelligence (AI) does not lead to job losses in the state by preparing the Kannada language to meet new technological challenges. Speaking at the 70th Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations organised by the Department of School Education and Literacy, he called on scholars and technology experts to work together to make Kannada a language of modern technology.

Siddaramaiah urged the Union Government to introduce appropriate legislation to promote education in regional languages. The state, he added, is in the process of developing 800 Kannada-medium and 100 Urdu-medium schools into Karnataka Public Schools (KPS), each being upgraded with modern infrastructure at a cost of ₹4 crore per school under a ₹2,500 crore project.

He also announced that Kannada teaching will be made compulsory in madrasas, with 180 already introducing Kannada this year. The programme will be expanded to 1,500 madrasas, and ₹483 crore has been allocated to upgrade 100 Urdu schools under the KPS model to promote inclusivity and mainstream education for minority communities.

Rajyotsava celebrated across Bengaluru

Bengaluru turned into a sea of red and yellow on Friday as thousands of residents celebrated Kannada Rajyotsava with immense pride and joy. The city's streets, flyovers, and markets were decked with Kannada flags fluttering atop vehicles, buildings, and homes, reflecting the deep love and respect people hold for their language and culture. Several organisations, educational institutions, and local associations organised cultural performances, folk dances, music shows, and felicitation programmes to honour achievers in various fields.

In many neighbourhoods, volunteers and youth groups distributed sweets, food, and water to passers-by, auto drivers, and daily wage workers, adding a spirit of generosity to the celebrations. Kannada film songs and traditional drumming resonated across the city as processions marched proudly through major roads. **— BMB**

Garbage shame drive turns viral, citizens demand real clean-up action

Officials dumping rubbish outside offenders' homes trigger laughter and outrage, as locals blame erratic waste collection for worsening civic mess

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While the city's Bengaluru Solid Waste Management team has won praise — and gone viral — for dumping rubbish outside the homes of those caught littering, many Bengalureans say the real issue lies elsewhere: irregular and inefficient waste collection.

Videos of civic marshals arriving at doorsteps with rubbish-laden trolleys, often accompanied by the popular Kannada song "Bandaro Bandaro Bhava Bandaro", have gone viral, drawing laughter, memes, and even applause from sections of the public. However, beneath the humour and headlines, a serious question is being raised by Bengalureans across the city — who is cleaning up after the cleaners?

PIC FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

Public shaming drive sparks debate over cleanliness

As officials go viral for shaming litterbugs, residents complain of missed pickups, absent bins, and chaotic schedules that leave streets dirtier despite mounting fines and awareness campaigns

"Before punishing, please collect properly"

While the initiative has caught the attention of citizens, many believe the civic body should first focus on fixing its own inefficiencies. In most residential areas, rubbish collection remains irregular, unpredictable, and incomplete.

"Instead of only targeting those who dump rubbish, the officials should first ensure proper, timely collection from every household," said Kavitha Rao, a resident of Rajajinagar. "The rubbish is collected just once a day, and there is no fixed timing. If the tipper doesn't come before we leave for work, we have no choice but to keep it outside."

Her concern echoes across the city. Office-goers, senior citizens, and homemakers say the unpredictability of rubbish pick-up is pushing people towards improper disposal. Despite paying a monthly waste management fee, residents allege that they do not receive consistent or full-service collection.

A few years ago, Bengaluru officials had spoken about emulating Indore's successful model — where rubbish is collected twice daily and segregated effectively at source. Yet, the plan never materialised. "Even though the fee structure was aligned to allow for better waste handling, the ground-level execution never improved," said Mohan Krishna, an activist. "Some days, the autos collect only dry waste, and other days only wet waste. Residents who diligently segregate waste are frustrated when both categories are not picked up properly."

Adding to the chaos is the absence of designated rubbish bins across most localities. "With no community bins and only one round of collection, what are people expected to do with their waste?" questioned Lakshmi Prasad, a resident of BTM Layout. "You can't penalise people for a system failure."

The viral drive

The SWM's "rubbish awareness drive" gained momentum earlier this week after several such public shaming incidents were captured on video. One particularly talked-about episode took place around 5:30 am in Ganganagar, where marshals caught a woman on camera throwing waste in a vacant plot. When confronted, she denied the act — but the officials showed her the video evidence, dumped the same waste outside her home, and fined her on the spot.

While many netizens hailed the act as a bold step towards accountability, others found it excessive. "This is good theatre, but not good governance," said a civic volunteer from North Bengaluru. "Real change will come from discipline, not drama."

Defending the campaign, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management CEO Karegowda said, "This drive is not about humiliation; it's about creating awareness. Around 300 homes have been identified so far, and approximately 3 lakh has been collected in fines. The initiative will pause briefly and resume next week." He added that nearly 5,000 autos are deployed daily for door-to-door collection across the city, but admitted that some residents continue to dump waste despite repeated warnings. "Our goal is not to punish, but to ensure participation in keeping Bengaluru clean," he said.

Citizens want a clean, reliable, and transparent waste management system with fixed collection timings, twice-daily pick-ups, and contractor accountability. "Awareness campaigns matter, but consistency is key," said Rakesh K from HSR Layout. "Collect the rubbish on time every day, and people will follow the rules. Fix the system first — behaviour will follow."

Elderly informal workers demand urgent healthcare overhaul

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The retired informal-sector workers and senior citizens of Akhila Karnataka Vyyovrudhara Okkoota (AIKYATA), who recently assessed government health facilities in Bengaluru Urban, have submitted key recommendations to the state government for urgent improvements. The survey revealed significant gaps in primary and secondary care for elderly and informal-sector retirees, as reported by BM on October 4.

Members of AIKYATA emphasised that, unlike formal-sector retirees, they have worked into old age without pensions or social security. They have submitted recommendations to Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, urging immediate action to strengthen healthcare services for elderly informal workers.

Latha S, President of AIKYATA, said: "We have worked in various informal jobs such as domestic work, construction, head-loading, and more. Now, in old age, we are unable to work and, without any social security or pension, are completely dependent on the public health system. We have contributed our entire lives to the development of society, yet in old age we are left without proper healthcare. The right to health is our longstanding demand, and through our survey report and recommendations we call for improvements to the public health system."

AIKYATA emphasised that

Bangalore Mirror

Critical gaps depriving city's elderly of right to healthcare

Study reveals lack of medicines, early closures, corruption, poor planning at govt run health facilities

BM had reported about the survey findings on October 4

healthcare providers must receive specialised training to manage elderly health issues, including neurological, cardiac, metabolic, and nutritional conditions. Latha stressed the need for essential services—screening, physiotherapy, nutritional support, fall prevention, early detection, timely referrals, and home-based care for immobile seniors—alongside the distribution of assistive devices. Addressing social determinants, such as nutrition, clean water, transport, pensions, and sanitation, is vital to uphold seniors' dignity. Successful models like Kerala's Kudumbashree 'Vayomaithri' can guide Karnataka. Shantha V added that public spaces should be age- and disability-friendly, evening OPDs expanded, emergency services strengthened, and senior-focused centres like Jayadeva's cardiac facility and NIMHANS brain clinics replicated. Regular staff salaries, quality food services, and functional referral systems with coordinators are also crucial. Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao has accepted these recommendations for implementation.

Builders face massive fines for plan violations

The Karnataka government has revised penalty rates for buildings constructed in violation of approved plans within the jurisdiction of urban local bodies. A recent government order allows such buildings to obtain revised building plans upon paying a prescribed fine, provided the deviations are within 15 per cent of the approved setback limits.

As per the new rates, residential, industrial, and other non-commercial structures in Town Panchayat areas will pay 1,000 per sq metre, and commercial buildings will be fined 1,500 per sq metre. In Municipal Council areas, the fines are 1,200 and 1,800, respectively; in City Municipal Council limits, 1,500 and 2,250; and in City Corporation limits, 2,000 and 3,000 per sq metre. For violations related to Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and car parking space, the government has imposed an additional penalty of 5,000 for parking violations. FAR violations attract fines on a similar scale—ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 per sq metre, depending on the category of the urban local body and whether the building is residential or commercial. Officials have clarified that the order aims to regularise minor deviations while ensuring compliance with urban planning norms and discouraging large-scale violations. **–BMB**

Police raid rave, over 130 detained

The Kaggalipura police raided a private homestay on the outskirts of Bengaluru in the early hours of Saturday, detaining more than 130 young people for allegedly taking part in a rave party. Several were found under the influence of alcohol, and a few were suspected of having consumed narcotics.

The operation, carried out around 3 a.m. at Ayaan Retreat Homestay within the Kaggalipura police limits, followed a tip-off about an illegal gathering involving drug use and loud music. All those detained were residents of Bengaluru and were taken to Ramanagara District Hospital for medical examination. ASP Ramachandraya visited the hospital to oversee the process.

Investigations later revealed that the party had been organised through a WhatsApp group named "Gen Z." The members, mostly college students and young professionals aged between 19 and 23, allegedly used the group to plan and update each other about such events. Police said three of the attendees were minors.

According to police, the homestay had been operating without the required permissions and had been hosting similar events in recent weeks, causing a disturbance to nearby residents. Acting on specific information, a team led by the Kaggalipura Police Inspector raided the location.

Over 100 revellers, including nearly 70 women—among them 35 young women and three minors—were found at the venue. During the raid, officers recovered several bottles of alcohol, cigarette butts, and small quantities of cannabis. The seized material has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for testing. A senior police officer said the absence of a security guard and the lack of permission had made it easier for such events to be held. Four people identified as organisers have been taken into custody for questioning. A case has been registered under the Excise Act, Karnataka Police Act, and relevant BNS sections. Police are investigating the organisers and checking for similar events elsewhere. **–BMB**

From tech hub to concrete slum: Whitefield's freefall

Unchecked construction, vanishing greenery, choked drains turning Whitefield's tech-fueled boom into full-blown urban nightmare

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Illegal layouts, narrow lanes, sewage spills pushing city's tech hub toward complete dysfunction

Despite the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Commissioner's directive to engineers to curb illegal constructions and the proposal to form a special enforcement squad, unauthorised buildings continue to mushroom across the city in open violation of building bylaws. The ongoing construction of multi-storey structures, especially in residential areas, highlights the failure of the enforcement wing to act on the Commissioner's orders.

A Whitefield, known as the city's tech corridor, is grappling with a crisis caused by the unchecked mushrooming of illegal layouts and unregulated buildings. Rows of poorly planned structures, narrow mud roads, overflowing sewage channels, and cramped paying-guest accommodations have begun coming up across the neighbourhood, raising fears that one of Bengaluru's most aspirational addresses is rapidly descending into urban chaos.

Residents and urban practitioners warn that the area is sliding towards a "concrete slum," as rampant violations in land development norms collide with the pressures of unprecedented real estate demand fueled by IT parks and a growing migrant workforce. They pointed out that what was meant to be a planned, livable urban extension has turned into a maze of settlements built in violation of zoning and building laws, without proper roads, drainage networks, sewage systems, or public amenities.

Sandeep Anirudhan, Convenor, Citizens' Agenda for Bengaluru, said, "The biggest problem now in Whitefield is illegal layouts and illegal buildings. The violation of rules regarding layout formation mandating civic amenities and permissions from the BDA is brazen, leading to slum-like layouts with narrow streets, zero amenities, and overcrowding. Unscrupulous builders are constructing illegal PGs with zero setbacks, violating FAR by 100–200%, packing tenants like sardines. Populations explode 25 to 50 times beyond capacity, collapsing all amenities, with sewage on streets, water and power shortages, and illegal commercialisation. Whitefield is turning into a concrete slum. Worse, instead of cracking down, the government is crafting schemes to permit violations to continue."

Locals say the state's inability or unwillingness to enforce strict urban planning norms has encouraged builders. In several pockets, borewells have run dry, tankers crowd narrow lanes, stormwater drains are blocked with debris, and garbage piles spill into public spaces. Streets meant for two-way movement barely accommodate motorcycles; fire or ambulance access remains questionable. A resident said, "Civic bodies are often seen acting only after public outrage or court intervention, while residents find themselves spending their own pockets to fix broken drains, desilt lakes, or repair internal roads. We want to protect Whitefield from unchecked construction."

Rains lash B'luru, but Kanakanagar stays dry

PICTURE FOR REPRESENTATION ONLY

Even as Bengaluru has been receiving steady rainfall over the past week, residents of Channasandra Kanakanagar are battling a severe water crisis. The contrast is striking — while city roads remain flooded and drains overflow, this neighbourhood struggles to get even a single drop of drinking water. Residents say the problem began over two and a half years ago when the borewells supplying water to the area stopped functioning. Despite repeated appeals, the borewells have not been repaired. To make matters worse, though the Cauvery water pipeline work in the locality has been completed, supply through the network is yet to begin.

Channasandra Kanakanagar, which was brought under BBMP limits through the 110 Villages Project, continues to suffer from poor infrastructure. "We have been waiting for years. Earlier, water from eight borewells was pumped into an overhead tank and distributed to all homes. Now, only two are working; the rest have failed," said Ravi, a resident.

According to locals, at least four to five borewells need to function simultaneously to fill the overhead tank and ensure adequate supply. With most borewells defunct and the temporary waterman transferred elsewhere, distribution has completely stopped. Over 1,500 families, mostly from low- and middle-income backgrounds, now depend on private tankers, spending ₹2,000–₹3,000 a month. "We are paying so much for water while our taps run dry every day. It's becoming unbearable," said Shobha, another resident.

Officials from the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) confirmed that the Cauvery water pipeline is under inspection. "We found damage in about 15 sections of the line. Repairs are underway, and we expect Cauvery water to reach households in six months," said a BWSSB official.

Meanwhile, confusion between departments has delayed action. While BWSSB handles borewell maintenance, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) manages manpower such as appointing a waterman. This lack of coordination has left residents stuck in the middle of a prolonged dry spell. — BMB

Endless chaos grips Jalahalli Cross junction

Haphazardly moving vehicles, unruly autorickshaws cutting lanes, shrill honking, and helpless pedestrians dodging traffic — this is the everyday reality at Jalahalli Cross junction on the Bengaluru–Tumakuru highway. As a crucial gateway for commuters entering and exiting the city, the junction handles traffic from four directions. Repeated failures of congestion-easing measures have forced pedestrians to crossroads amid chaotic vehicle movement. Signal timing remains skewed — Tumakuru-bound traffic gets nearly two minutes, while vehicles heading toward Yelahanka or Sunkadakatte get less than a minute, causing signal jumps and rising risks for pedestrians.

BMTC and KSRTC buses often block intersections or halt in the middle of the junction, worsening the gridlock. Autos drive erratically, while buses heading toward Peenya Phase 1, supposed to stop 200 meters away, crowd the junction instead. Although an underpass project was sanctioned, it remains stalled due to land acquisition hurdles involving two properties. Dasarahalli MLA S Muniraju has raised the issue multiple times with the BBMP and the government. The original ₹118-crore grade separator plan, conceived during the JDS–Congress coalition, had ₹60 crore earmarked for land and ₹57.22 crore for construction. Despite tenders being floated and some structures cleared, the project remains incomplete. Former MLA R Manjunath has sought Deputy CM D K Shivakumar's intervention to revive it.

Signal timing remains uneven, giving Tumakuru-bound traffic longer clearance while other directions face shorter cycles, prompting risky jumps

Commuters say crossing the junction has become a daily ordeal. "The prolonged delay in executing the underpass has disrupted vehicular flow and endangered pedestrians, especially students and seniors," said Prasanna Kumar, a regular commuter. With no pedestrian crossing or skywalk, people dodge speeding vehicles to cross. Urban experts urge a coordinated traffic plan, better enforcement, and swift project execution, warning that further delays will turn Jalahalli Cross into an unmanageable choke point. — BMB

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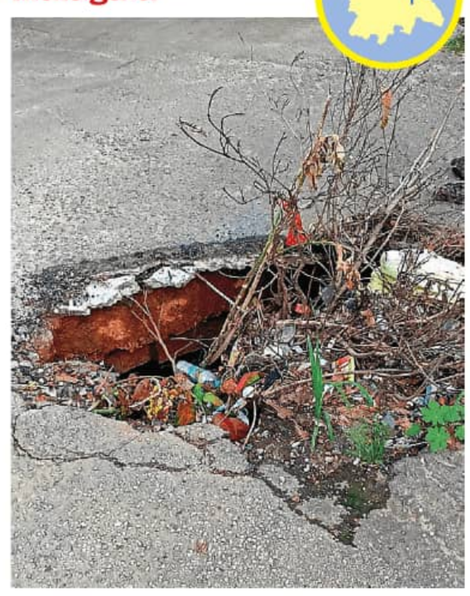
Branch blockage
RT Nagar

In RT Nagar, trimmed tree branches left uncleared for over a week have blocked footpaths, forcing pedestrians onto busy roads and putting them at risk.

Pothole chaos
Malagala


Potholes near Malagala 2nd Stage in Nagarbhavi have severely disrupted traffic flow, causing frequent jams and inconvenience for daily commuters.

Danger drive
Varthur Road

Varthur Road continues to languish in a neglected and hazardous state, posing serious risks to motorists and pedestrians alike.

Mark confusion clouds SSLC Kannada exams again

Uncertainty continues over whether SSLC students will write their first language exams — including Kannada — for 100 or 125 marks in the 2025–26 academic year. Despite months of debate, the government has not issued a clear directive, leaving over seven lakh students anxious as exams draw near.

Earlier, School Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa had said that opinions would be collected before limiting first language exams to 100 marks. However, a new circular from the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board confirms that this year's exams will again be held for 125 marks.

This indecision follows protests from writers, teachers, and Kannada activists — including Baragur Ramachandrappa — who argued that reducing marks would undermine the language's historical and cultural importance.

Officials say the issue is sensitive, especially during Kannada Rajyotsava season, and that a final decision will only be made after consulting all stakeholders. The Board clarified that although a proposal to standardise all subjects to 100 marks was submitted months ago, no government order has been issued yet. For now, the 125-mark system introduced after the Gokak agitation remains unchanged. **–BMB**

Man bludgeons colleague with dumbbell, surrenders to cops

A late-night argument between two employees of a private firm in MC Layout turned fatal after a 24-year-old man bludgeoned his senior colleague to death with a dumbbell on Friday night.

The accused, identified as Somala Vamshi (24), worked at Data Digital Bank, the same firm where the victim Bhimesh Babu (41) from Vijayawada was employed. Both were on a night shift when the incident occurred around 1.30 am

Police said the two had stayed back at the office, as they often did, when an argument broke out over switching off the light. The quarrel escalated, and in a fit of rage, Vamshi picked up a dumbbell and struck Babu on the head, killing him instantly.

Realising the gravity of his act, Vamshi walked to the Govindaraja Nagar Police Station and confessed to the murder, saying he wished to surrender.

Preliminary inquiry revealed the firm also undertook short film shoots, and both men frequently stayed overnight at the premises. Police have seized the dumbbell used in the assault and registered a case. **–BMB**

Tunnel Road: Officials not seeming to mind the gap?

Tender for DPR consultant floated months before govt nod, raising questions; BSMILE says project report preparation or feasibility study is carried out parallel to budget process

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A Right to Information (RTI) reply has revealed that the tender for procuring the Detailed Project Report (DPR) consultant for the controversial Twin Tunnel Road Project was floated five months before the state government's official approval for the project.

As per the RTI document, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), based on the findings of a feasibility study, submitted a proposal to the state government. The government provided in-principle approval for constructing the twin-tube tunnel road between Esteem Mall and Silk Board junction on October 4. However, the tender for procuring the DPR consultant was floated on May 20, 2024 — nearly five months before official approval was received.

Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-SMILE) clarified that for projects costing below ₹10 crore, approval authority lies with the elected council of the municipal corporation, in this case, the BBMP.

"In 2023–24, BBMP allocated a budget of ₹200 crore for consultancy work, including DPR and feasibility studies. DPR preparation or feasibility study is usually carried out parallel to the budget process. DPR was prepared at the BBMP level, and since the budget was below ₹10 crore, it was approved by the BBMP council. The BBMP council has the power to grant sanction and administrative approval up to ₹10 crore," said Dr B S Prahalad, Technical Director at B-SMILE.

In the 13-page Government Order (GO) furnished by the Urban Development Department in response to an RTI application filed by a city-based environmentalist, it is mentioned that after detailed discussion on the draft DPR with various government agencies, it was concluded that the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) is a well-balanced approach between risk and benefit, protecting the interests of both the government and investors. The Additional Chief Secretary informed the meeting that the choice between the HAM and Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model must be vetted by the Finance Department.

The GO further indicates that the Boston Consulting Group recommended the improved BOT model. However, it remains unclear whether the Finance Department has agreed to this recommendation, as the Urban Development Department had favored the HAM model.

Govt provided in-principle approval for constructing the twin-tube tunnel road between Esteem Mall and Silk Board junction on October 4

Bengaluru Smart Infrastructure Limited (B-SMILE) clarifies that for projects costing below ₹10 crore, approval authority lies with the elected council of the municipal corporation, in this case, the BBMP

"The improved BOT model has effectively turned the Tunnel Road project into a real estate venture. The tender evaluation criteria favor the bidder who maximises real estate revenue and minimises reliance on toll road revenues," said a city-based mobility expert.

According to B-SMILE, however, the Finance Department has already vetted the BOT model for the project.

The document also highlights that the government approved an additional ₹2,232 crore in project cost to deploy eight high-speed Tunnel Boring Machines (TBMs) aimed at reducing the construction time to 26 months. Experts, however, question whether the rate of boredom is solely determined by the number of TBMs deployed.

"Speed of TBMs is a critical factor in executing a project on this scale. A medium-speed boring machine digs around three meters per day, which totals about 90 meters a month. At this pace, the project timeline would stretch, causing inconvenience to the public and escalating costs. With high-speed TBMs, the boring rate will double," explained Dr Prahalad.

City-based mobility experts and environmentalists continue to allege that the administrative approval process for the Twin Tunnel Road project is riddled with inconsistencies.

"As per the information obtained through RTI, on the face of it, procedure seems to have been followed, but questions remain about the project's utility and financial viability," said Dattatreya Devare, the environmentalist who filed the RTI.

Fake video targets CM and Ministers

The Social Media Monitoring Cell of the Cyber Crime Division has registered a case against a YouTube channel for uploading a misleading video targeting the Chief Minister and other state leaders.

The FIR was filed based on a complaint by Asma Begum, an Assistant Sub-Inspector with the cybercrime police. The accused has been booked under relevant sections of the Information Technology Act for spreading false and defamatory content.

According to the complaint, a YouTube channel named @News_Factory_09 had uploaded a short video falsely claiming that a report by the Azim Premji Foundation stated schoolchildren across Karnataka were being given only three eggs a week under the mid-day meal scheme instead of six.

The video further alleged that the remaining eggs were being "swallowed" by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, and Education Minister Madhu Bangarappa, implying corruption.

Officials clarified that no such report exists and termed the video "deliberately misleading." Police are tracing the channel's creator. **–BMB**

Gold, mobiles seized from snatching gang

The Kengeri police have arrested five men in connection with a recent chain-snatching incident and recovered gold ornaments worth about ₹8 lakh.

The case was registered based on a complaint by Hemavati, who reported that two gold chains weighing around 75 grams were snatched from her neck while she was walking opposite JK Motors Car Care Centre, Kengeri Suburban, on October 20 at around 6:30 p.m.

Following the complaint, a special investigation team was formed under the Kengeri Police Station. After analysing CCTV footage and tracking multiple leads, police arrested the accused on October 26.

The arrested have been identified as Naveen (32), Mahesh (26), Sudeep (24), Darshan (23), and Harshavardhan (23). Police also seized two two-wheelers, four mobile phones, and gold ornaments weighing 70 grams. **–BMB**

Hopcoms shrink as 140 outlets shut across K'taka

Once a farmers' marketing backbone, Hopcoms struggles with losses, staff crunch, and rising competition from private retailers and online platforms

Sridhar.Vivan
@timesofindia.com
TWEETS @sridharVMIRROR

To rebuild trust and market share, Hopcoms expands outreach via mobile vans, apartment drives, and wholesale tie-ups across Bengaluru, reviving farmer links

More than 140 Hopcoms outlets have shut down across Karnataka in recent years, with Bengaluru accounting for over 60% of these closures, according to data presented in the Legislative Council.

The figures reveal that of the 266 outlets once operational in the state capital, only 178 remain, while 88 have downed shutters. Statewide, Hopcoms — the Horticultural Producers' Co-operative Marketing and Processing Society — once ran 557 outlets. As of the latest count, only 416 are open, while 141 have closed. Apart from Bengaluru, major closures were reported in Mysuru (17), Kolar (8), Vijayapura (6), and Tumakuru (4). Several districts such as Chamarajanagar, Chikkamagaluru, Shivamogga, and Uttara Kannada (Sirsi) have retained all their outlets.

In a written reply to the Council, the government attributed the closures primarily to staff shortages and financial distress. Bengaluru Hopcoms, in particular, has been operating at a loss for the past four years, according to audit reports. Officials said the losses stem largely from a growing number of retired employees and the resulting financial burden of post-retirement benefits, alongside declining revenue from urban outlets.

The closures have sparked concern among horticultural producers, many of whom depend on Hopcoms as a direct marketing channel for their produce. The cooperative, once a trusted bridge between farmers and consumers, has seen its market share steadily eroded by private retailers, supermarket chains, and online grocery platforms that offer wider accessibility and aggressive pricing.

The state government has sanctioned a ₹15-crore long-term working capital loan to Hopcoms at an annual interest rate of 10.25%, aimed at stabilising finances and boosting daily turnover. Horticulture Minister SS Mallikarjun said the cooperative is now supplying fruits and vegetables at wholesale rates to hotels, factories, and institutions, deploying mobile vans to reach localities, and conducting sales drives in apartment complexes across Bengaluru.

Over 140 Hopcoms outlets, including 88 in city, have shut down due to losses and staffing issues; a ₹15 cr revival plan now aims to rebuild the cooperatives lost network

Officials hope the ongoing 2024-25 audit will mark a turnaround for the cooperative. However, the Council noted that regaining Hopcoms' former scale will depend on sustained reforms, efficient manpower management, transparent operations, and renewed trust among both farmers and consumers.

IN BRIEF

White-topping delays prompt crackdown

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed officials to accelerate white-topping works across 28 major city roads through coordinated inter-departmental efforts. Chairing a review meeting, he warned contractors of strict action for poor progress, ordering show-cause notices to defaulters. Rao emphasised the need to resolve delays caused by BWSSB's pending road restoration, sewage and manhole issues, and traffic police permissions. He also instructed BESCOM to expedite shifting of poles and transformers and ensure pothole-free, durable roads. Departments must now submit clear timelines to fix inter-agency issues and adhere strictly to project completion deadlines without further extensions. **BMB**

Gaur dies amid relocation mishap

A female gaur (Indian bison) died during relocation from Bannerghatta Biological Park to Hyderabad, triggering allegations of veterinary negligence. The transfer was part of an approved animal exchange between Bannerghatta Safari and Hyderabad's Nehru Zoological Park. Officials said the gaur was tranquilised before being moved to a quarantine zone but died from complications believed to be caused by the sedative. Animal activists have accused authorities of violating relocation protocols that require strict veterinary and forest supervision. A Bannerghatta official maintained that all necessary precautions were followed, stating the gaur might have regained consciousness while being lifted with a belt, panicked, and suffered fatal injuries. Postmortem confirms cause before burial.

CCTVs, patrolling, security audits and more

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

him. Also, the guard was not present because of the new protocol that led to some guards being removed. The CCTV cameras were operative and that's how the accused were tracked and arrested," officials told BM.

Under the Karnataka Public Safety (Measures) Enforcement Act, 2017 the commercial establishments are required to install camera surveillance with specified reach and storage requirements. A senior police official from the Whitefield division said, "The survey shows all the establishments have cameras, but there is significant confusion among many establishments in the division about what sort of camera actually meets the standard.'"

As per the DG & IGP circular, police units are also required to conduct mock drills in banks and jewellery stores to test emergency responses and the effectiveness of communication systems during distress situations.

"We are in regular contact with bank officials and recently discussed security lapses after incidents of cheque thefts. Banks were advised to relocate cheque drop boxes kept outside the premises. A gang involved in such thefts was also arrested, and their modus operandi was shared with other banks to help strengthen preventive measures," said Commissioner of Police, Seemant Kumar Singh. He also said that the night beat officers have been instructed to intensify patrols around banks.

Discussions

The discussions in Tumakuru centred on ensuring the installation and maintenance of CCTV cameras, functioning burglar alarms, and the deployment of security guards at all banks. The session also covered additional precautionary measures to strengthen surveillance and prevent incidents of theft or robbery.

"We've noticed that different banks follow different security protocols, so we wanted to issue uniform directions to strengthen preventive measures. Many banks have a central control room where all their ATM cameras are connected, and if any suspicious movement is noticed, that can immediately be communicated to the local police. We've advised banks to follow this model and extend their camera networks to branch offices as well," Superintendent of Police Ashok KV told BM.

He added that they already have a command centre and are planning to integrate the banks' camera IP addresses and live feeds into the police command centre. "Besides this, regular security audits are being conducted to ensure compliance. We've also instructed banks to remain extra vigilant during high cash-flow days, typically the first and last days of the week, when diversion or distraction tactics are often used by offenders," he said.

How much loss is traffic-related delay causing B'luru?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

measures are taken to control these violations, the problem will persist. "Therefore, traffic officials must issue fines promptly to deter offenders," he said.

Speaking about fines, a traffic official explained that sometimes violators claim they don't have money at the moment. "They request us to just click a photo and book the case so they can pay the fine later. But when we tow the vehicle, they have no option to give such excuses; they must pay the fine first, and only then is the vehicle released," he said.

Shreehari said the primary responsibility lies with the civic agency. "Before approving building plans in commercial areas, the civic body must evaluate all aspects thoroughly, including parking requirements," he said. He said that as per norms, shops should not be permitted along the roadside without proper parking provisions. "When there are shops, people will surely come and park their vehicles, so they have to keep this in mind before they begin any project. But commuters should not misuse this opportunity and violate the rules," he said.

He said he had spoken to several residents to understand the losses caused by delays due to traffic. "A few years ago, when I spoke to and interviewed several residents, I found that Bengaluru was losing an estimated ₹192 crore every day due to traffic congestion, accidents, and related delays. This loss reflects the city's declining productivity when a trip that should take one hour stretches to two, the extra hour becomes non-productive time."

In other words, people lose valuable hours that could have been used for work or other meaningful activities, this growing "delay cost," which represents not just financial losses for the city but also the personal and economic burden placed on citizens because of these daily delays.

Traffic officials say that most violations are reported near hospitals, commercial complexes, and tech corridors. In many places, even though paid parking facilities are available, motorists prefer leaving their vehicles on the roadside to avoid parking fees.

VIBE CHECK *Where we check in on what is rad in Bengaluru*

Run B'luru run

Iffath Fathima talks to three of the most popular run clubs in city to understand the secret behind city's dash for fitness

Sleepy weekend mornings in Bengaluru are fast being replaced by something new -- sneakers hitting the pavement, music in the air, and communities of young people running together. For Gen Zs, weekend mornings no longer begin with hangovers or late brunches, but with sunrise jogs, coffee raves, and even full-blown run parties.

In just one year, run clubs have transformed Bengaluru's fitness landscape. They are not only about staying healthy but also about creating spaces for friendship, music, and social energy. BM spoke to founders of three run club— Daud Run Club, 56 Run Club, and Stride Run Club that are each shaping the city's run culture in its own way.

Daud Run Club

For Aryan Prasad, co-founder of Daud Run Club, the journey began with a personal search for balance. "I come from a small town and moved to Bangalore chasing bigger dreams. Running became my anchor, and slowly the idea of building a community around it turned into Daud," he said. Along with his co-founder Deepak, Aryan launched Daud in September 2024 with just 15–20 people and now Daud run has grown into a 35,000-strong community.

The idea for Prasad was simple, to make mornings as exciting as nights out. The community runs across Cubbon Park, city lakesides, and even rooftops. Distances are kept flexible from 2.5 km jogs to 20–30 minute time-based sessions. "The point isn't speed it's energy," he added.

Apart from the run, daud run club is known for its coffee raves and run raves, where sweaty jogs are followed by DJs, music, and socialising. "Imagine finishing a run, then walking into a café where a DJ is spinning and 100 people are vibing like it's 6 am Ibiza instead of Bangalore," he said.

They have also done splitsvilla -themed shows, which included fitness, drama and full production like a reality show and picnic-style runs with DJs and post-run pickleball tournaments, and collaborations with wellness brands that turned into mini-festivals.

For Aryan, the vision is to make Daud Run Club the hub for youth fitness culture in India, where running, wellness, and community collide.

56 Run Club

Another popular run club is the 56 Run Club, started in October 2024 by Arvind Srikanth, a 28-year-old professional working for a California-based startup.

"As people get older and move cities for work, it becomes harder to make meaningful connections. I felt sports and fitness could become an alternative social avenue. Running is the most basic sport unlike football or basketball, you don't need a team or equipment. Anyone can do it," says Srikanth.

The club began with the idea of making running more enjoyable. Today, it runs on an invite-only basis, limiting active membership to 400 while its larger community has grown to nearly 8,000 people who are on the waiting list.

What makes 56 Run Club unique is the kind of experiences it offers. "We were the first club in India to do a 'Run and Rave. We organised coffee raves and even an event called 'Ascent,' inspired by the World Trade Centre run in New York City. In Bengaluru, we recreated it by climbing the UB City towers. It was a huge hit. We are also the first run club in India to be sponsored by Nike," said Arvind.

The club keeps its activities fresh by adding twists to the runs. They hold 3 km and 5 km runs in Cubbon Park, trail runs and mix things up with frisbee games, yoga sessions, or track runs in Kanteerava Stadium.

"Running alone can feel harrowing, but when you're in a group, it becomes fun. The energy of the community keeps people coming back," says Arvind.

Stride Run Club

Stride Run Club, is making waves with its inclusivity and creativity. Founded by Sidharth Yadav, a 29-year-old content marketer and former journalist from Haryana, Stride Run Club started in September 2024. Sidharth had moved to Bengaluru earlier that year. "I came here in May and was

working from home. I didn't have friends, but I was into fitness. So, I thought, why not start a run club where people can come together for fitness at the same time make friends. It began with just three of us, and slowly more people started joining," he recalls.

Today, Stride Run Club has grown into a vibrant community that hosts 200 runners every week across HSR Layout, Indiranagar, and Cubbon Park. The club encourages all levels of participation, from beginners to seasoned runners.

"Our emphasis is simple run or walk, but don't stop. We call it 'move as one,'" says Sidharth. Their sessions range from short 2.5 km social runs to longer runs of up to 20 km and they even cover lake runs. They also organise time-based runs in Cubbon Park, where people move together for 90 minutes.

Like most of the run clubs, Stride's Run Raves are also popular that end with coffee, music, or even full-blown parties. "We've done run and rave events in over 15 locations. Last time, we partnered with an energy drink brand that brought a mobile truck. We finished the run and then partied," Sidharth says.

The club also collaborates with apparel and sports brands to give runners new experiences. A major highlight for them was when Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra joined one of their sessions earlier this year. "We've also done events with brands where they supplied apparel or sports gear, and we created reels for them," Sidharth added.

With over 24,000 Instagram followers, 3,500 members on WhatsApp, and an active Strava community, Stride Run Club has built a loyal following both online and offline.

SOCIALTATTLE

IMAGE OF THE DAY

A picture of a duo with cards hanging on them, one labelled "Caution Ejipura Flyover" and the other with "Sony" written on it, was posted on X by @paarugsethi. The photo, captioned "Halloween 2025," went viral.

WHAT'S TWEETING

A picture of a metro wrapped in Karnataka flag colour and featuring a photo of Dr. Puneeth Rajkumar, in remembrance and celebration of Rajyotsava, was posted on X by @DANAppu @DANNEVERAT · 10h
Namma metro looks so good today!!
@OfficialBMRCL
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18VIRAT with the caption, "Namma metro looks so good today!! @OfficialBMRCL #KannadaRajyotsavaSpecial #Karnataka #drpuneethrajkumar #appu."

A video featuring three young innovators from Bengaluru explaining their startup 'Eco Vala', an eco-friendly venture that makes paper bags without using glue or scissors, was posted on Instagram by user @southwalacom. The post highlighted their initiative, which promotes sustainability for just 10 a month while supporting young changemakers.

Three Bengaluru Kids Explain Their Startup 'Eco Vala', Which Makes Paper Bags Without Glue or Scissors and Offers a ₹10 Monthly Subscription Service.

BM TAGGED

A post on X by @MayankDas2687 highlighted the disastrous condition of BTM Second Stage near My Chicken and More, stating that the debris and stones need to be removed immediately as the road is dangerous. The post tagged @BbmpEast, @BBMPSWMSplComm, @BBMP_West, @CMofKarnataka, @bengalurupost1, @DKShivakumar, and @BangaloreMirror.

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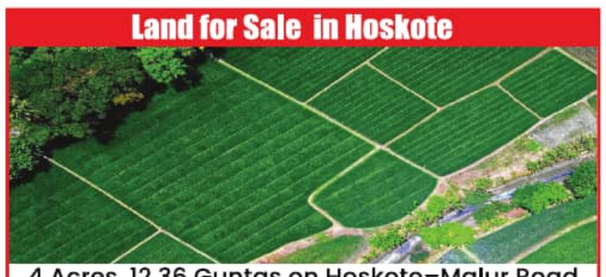

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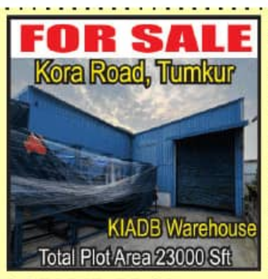

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

URBAN ACROBAT GRACE

Our reader shares a charming moment of a palm squirrel deftly balancing on an electric cable on its way to a tree in Kalyannagar. Agile and lively, these tiny acrobats enchant onlookers as they leap, clamber, and race across treetops—reminding us of the everyday grace hidden in urban wildlife.

The picture was clicked by reader **N J Ravi Chander**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesofindia.com**

City plans to eliminate 128 railway crossings by 2028

South Western Railway's three-year drive to replace congested level crossings with modern bridges aims to cut delays, pollution, and commuter frustration

Getting stuck at railway crossings across Bengaluru could soon be history. The South Western Railway (SWR), Bengaluru Division, has drawn up an ambitious plan to eliminate all 128 level crossings (LCs) within a 100-km radius of the city over the next three years — a move expected to significantly ease traffic congestion and improve road safety. The initiative follows a directive from Union Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna, who in July instructed officials to identify all crossings and replace them with Road Over Bridges (ROBs) or Road Under Bridges (RUBs). Acting on the order, the Railways conducted a comprehensive survey and prepared a detailed report on the progress of each crossing.

For thousands of commuters, long waits at railway gates have been a frustrating routine. "Once the gate is down, motorists must wait at least five to fifteen minutes. When two trains pass back-to-back, the delay can stretch to half an hour," said a senior SWR official. Beyond wasted time, these choke points worsen traffic jams, noise, and vehicle emissions, adding to the city's pollution load. The new plan aims to resolve these challenges by introducing grade-separated crossings across Bengaluru's rail network.

Of the 128 crossings, 35 have already been approved for bridge construction. Another 20 are in the Detailed Project Report (DPR) stage, while 14 proposals await final sanction. The Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company (K-RIDE) — implementing the Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project — will handle 22 more crossings in coordination with state and central agencies. A recent coordination meeting chaired by Minister Somanna and attended by Tushar Giri Nath, Additional Chief Secretary of the Urban Development Department, reviewed land acquisition, funding mechanisms, and implementation timelines. "Inter-agency coordination is crucial for smooth progress," an official noted, stressing the need for collaboration between the state, BBMP, and the Railways.

Key locations marked for LC removal include Kodigehalli, Yelahanka back gate, Dodda Jala, KIADB (Devanahalli), Banaswadi, Kaverinagar, Nagawara, Kanakanagar (two points), Jnanabharathi, and RV College Junction. Progress has slowed after Larsen & Toubro (L&T) withdrew from its contract, delaying several active sites.

In a major urban mobility boost, Bengaluru will phase out 128 level crossings within 100 km, replacing them with bridges to ease traffic, reduce pollution, and enhance safety citywide

To maintain pace, the Railways has set a prioritisation criterion — crossings with daily Traffic Vehicle Units (TVU) above 50,000 to one lakh will be taken up first. Projects with over one lakh TVU will be jointly funded by the state and centre, while the Railways will fully fund select ones to avoid bureaucratic delays. Urban mobility experts have welcomed the move but cautioned on execution quality. "The three-year deadline is realistic, but Bengaluru needs speed, coordination, and quality. Bridges must be scientifically designed to prevent waterlogging," said one expert. If executed as planned, removing all 128 level crossings will mark a transformative shift in Bengaluru's transport landscape — making cross-city travel faster, safer, and smoother. **— BMB**

DID YOU KNOW?

For 25 years, the International Space Station (ISS) has remained continuously inhabited—a remarkable milestone in human spaceflight. The first crew—NASA's Bill Shepherd and Russia's Sergei Krikalev and Yuri Gidzenko—arrived on November 2, 2000, transforming the then-cramped, humid module into a liveable outpost. Since then, 290 people from 26 countries have visited, from professional astronauts to space tourists and even filmmakers. Over the decades, the ISS has weathered near disasters—leaks, collisions, and a spacewalker's near-drowning—yet it continues to thrive far beyond its design life. The orbital laboratory has evolved into a "four-star hotel" with internet access, an observation cupola, musical performances, and experiments growing plants and baking cookies. Astronauts have experienced both joy and tragedy—marriages, births, and losses—while conducting thousands of zero-gravity experiments, including NASA's famed twins' study with the Kelly brothers. As the ISS nears retirement in 2030, NASA plans to transition to commercial stations. SpaceX will handle its controlled reentry in 2031, while private firms like Axiom Space prepare the next generation of orbital habitats to continue humanity's presence in space. **— AP**

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No, Taylor Swift did not turn down the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show

Claim: Rumours circulated online that Taylor Swift had turned down the opportunity to headline the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show because she wouldn't be allowed to own the performance footage, suggesting a dispute over creative and ownership rights with the NFL and producers.
The Fact: Taylor Swift clarified on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon that she never turned down the 2026 Super Bowl offer. She praised Jay-Z's Roc Nation, debunked the ownership rumour, and said she's simply focused on supporting fiancé Travis Kelce during the NFL season.

Taylor Swift says she did not turn down the 2026 Super Bowl halftime show, which will be headlined by Bad Bunny. "The Life of a Showgirl" singer paid a visit to "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" on Monday and dispelled a few rumours. Most notably, she shared she did not turn down the NFL's biggest stage because she wouldn't be allowed to own the performance footage, as claimed in a popular internet rumour.

"No, no, no," Swift said.

The Super Bowl halftime show is produced by the NFL, Apple Music, and Roc Nation — the latter founded by music mogul Jay-Z. "Jay-Z has always been very good to me. Our teams are really close. Like, they sometimes will call and say, 'How does she feel about the Super Bowl?' And that's not like an official offer or, like, an official conference room conversation," Swift told Fallon. "We're always able to tell him the truth, which is that, like, I am in love with a guy who does that sport on that actual field," she continued, referring to fiancé Travis Kelce — a star tight end for the Kansas City Chiefs and a Super Bowl champion.

"Like, that is violent chess. That is gladiators without swords. That is dangerous. The whole season I am locked in on what that man is doing on the field," she said. "Can you imagine if he's out there every single week, like, putting his life on the line, doing this very dangerous, very high-pressure, high-intensity sport and I'm like, 'I wonder what my choreography should be?'" Swift joked. "'I think we should do two verses of 'Shake It Off' into 'Blank Space' into 'Cruel Summer' would be great.' And this is nothing to do with Travis; he would love for me to do it. I'm just too locked in."

Last month, it was announced that global superstar Bad Bunny will bring his Latin trap, reggaeton swagger, and Puerto Rican pride to the Super Bowl live from Levi's Stadium on Feb. 8 in Santa Clara, California.

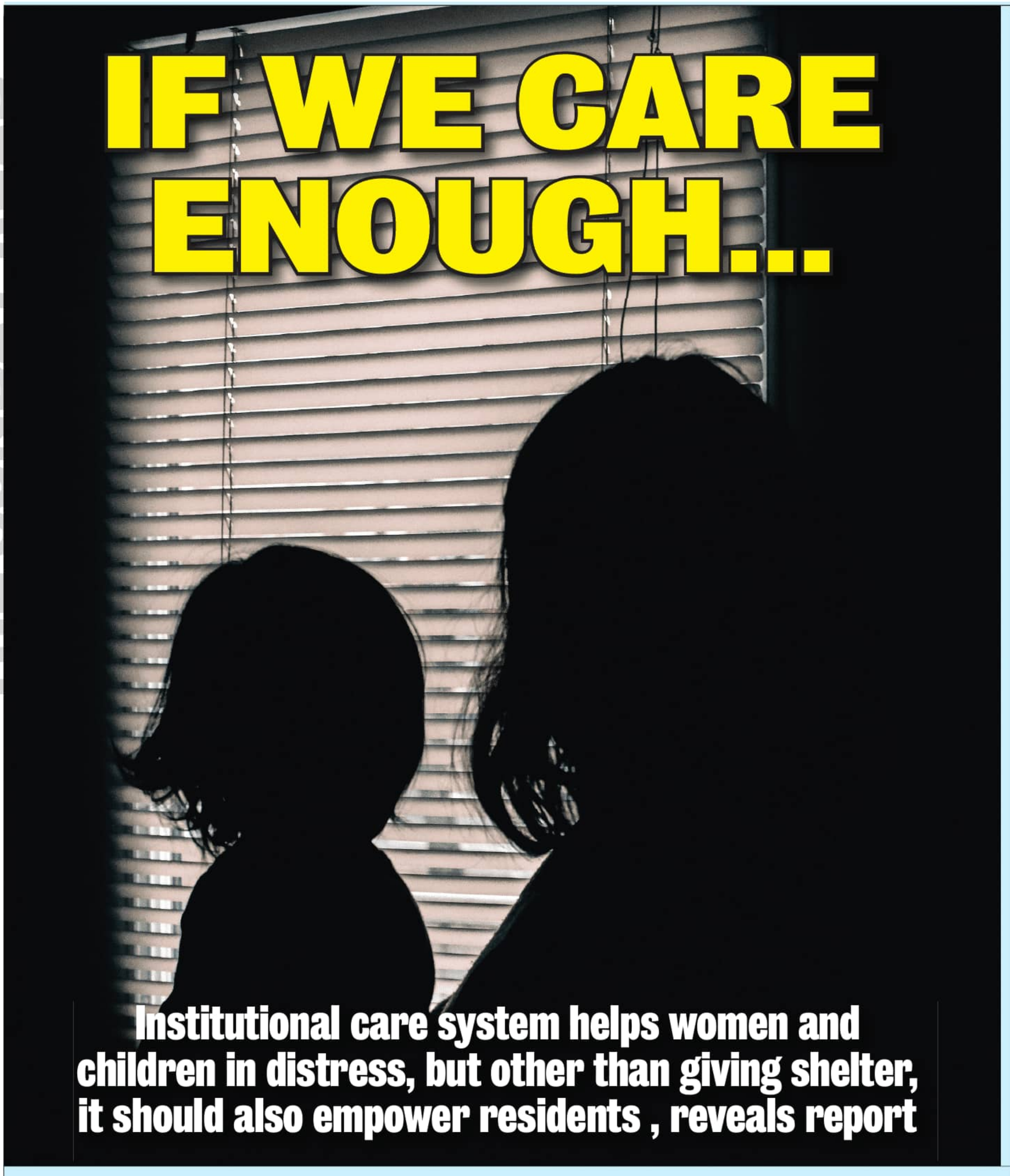
It's an ideal casting: Bad Bunny is fresh off a historic Puerto Rico residency that drew more than half a million fans and is leading all nominees at the Latin Grammys in November.

"What I'm feeling goes beyond myself," Bad Bunny said in a statement. "It's for those who came before me and ran countless yards so I could come in and score a touchdown… this is for my people, my culture, and our history."

On Saturday, Bad Bunny hosted the season 51 premiere of "Saturday Night Live" with a few jokes about his forthcoming Super Bowl halftime show. **— AP**

THE SUNDAY READ

IF WE CARE ENOUGH...



Institutional care system helps women and children in distress, but other than giving shelter, it should also empower residents , reveals report

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A new report by Enfold Proactive Health Trust in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has found that while India's institutional care system provides critical support for women and children in distress, it must evolve beyond custodial shelter to ensure long-term empowerment, dignity and reintegration into society.

The report, titled 'Empowerment and Rehabilitation of Women and Children in Shelter Homes, After-care and Child Care Institutions: Models & Replicable Practices' examines 18 institutions across Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana and West Bengal. It documents successful practices in shelters for women survivors of violence, after-care homes for young women leaving Child Care Institutions (CCIs), and homes for children in need of care and protection.

The report states, "Institutional spaces such as shelter homes, after-care homes, and child care institutions (CCIs) can provide an opportunity to create safe, inclusive, and nurturing environments for the survivors and children." However, it warns that "long-term rehabilitation and reintegration require attention not only to physical safety and care, but also to the emotional, psychological, and social needs of the residents".

The study underscores that institutional care should be rooted in respect, autonomy and individual agency. Women survivors and young girls leaving CCIs, the report says, must be treated as "rights-holders with agency, resourcefulness and the capacity to rebuild their lives". It highlights after-care models where residents participate in decisions about their education, livelihood and well-being. One such approach is based on the acronym CRAFT — 'Care, Respect, Affection, Freedom and Trust'.

The report notes that these values "form the bedrock of the relationship between residents and caregivers," and help create an environment of belonging, self-worth and resilience.

> **Long-term rehabilitation and reintegration demand attention to the emotional, psychological, and social needs too. Those leaving CCIs must be treated as rights-holders with agency and capacity to rebuild their lives**
>
> –From the report by Enfold Proactive Trust & UNFPA

Rehab and care

In the context of child care institutions, the report stresses that "rehabilitation must go beyond protection or custodial care". It advocates "building trust, providing individualised support, catering to the social and emotional needs, delivering education and vocational training, creating positive routines and ensuring follow-up after the child leaves institutional care". Such measures, it argues, are essential for children to develop confidence and life skills necessary for independent living.

The study identifies two operational frameworks for shelters and after-care institutions — a government–civil society partnership model and a purely civil society-led model. The first usually accommodates a larger number of residents under government schemes, while the latter caters to smaller groups with more intensive, individualised care. "The quality and impact of services," the report observes, "are closely linked to the flexibility of the model, staff motivation, and the ability to raise additional funds and volunteer support."

Despite these encouraging examples, the report highlights significant systemic challenges. For children, it notes, "institutionalisation should be the last resort," but the absence of a structured after-care system leaves many vulnerable once they turn 18. Residents reported "fear of failure, lack of privacy, stigma and low confidence" when preparing to re-enter society. For women survivors, the report cites "rigid institutional processes, limited autonomy, inadequate infrastructure, and weak linkages to livelihood opportunities" as major barriers. It adds, "the absence of systematic after-care and community reintegration mechanisms results in women and girls returning to unsafe environments or facing economic insecurity."

Existing policy

The findings are situated within India's existing policy framework. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 mandates after-care for children leaving CCIs, while the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 provides for shelter homes for women. Central schemes such as Mission Vatsalya and Samarthya set the structure for care, but the report notes that "there are wide variations in quality, availability and accessibility of services across states." Previous audits, it recalls, have "flagged gaps in staffing, counselling, education and vocational opportunities" and the "absence of monitoring and evaluation frameworks that measure the actual outcomes of rehabilitation."

Among its key recommendations, the report calls for establishing a "continuum of care" that begins with emergency support and extends through education, skill development, psychosocial counselling and community reintegration. It insists that "after-care must be treated as an integral part of institutional care, not an optional extension." The study also calls for strengthening human resources through trained counsellors and mentors, ensuring privacy and dignity in institutions, improving infrastructure, and building strong linkages with community and family networks.

The report further advocates for structured monitoring and evaluation systems to track outcomes and identify replicable practices. "Real success," the authors write, "is when a survivor or a young person leaving care is able to lead an independent and dignified life, with the confidence and capability to make their own decisions."

The report calls safety and shelter as only the first steps and empowerment, independence, and dignity the ultimate goals. It states that effective institutional care "requires an ecosystem of support built on empathy, accountability and respect for agency."

"Every institution that truly empowers its residents," the authors affirm, "does not just provide care — it provides the foundation for a future built on choice, confidence and hope."

The great AI juggernaut

Tech sector trends last week show no let-up in artificial intelligence infra building

A momentous week in the technology sector made it clear there is no sign the boom in building artificial intelligence infrastructure is slowing — despite the bubble talk. Nvidia, whose processors are the AI revolution's backbone, became the first company to surpass $5 trillion in market value. Microsoft and OpenAI inked a deal enhancing the ChatGPT maker's fundraising ability and OpenAI promptly started laying groundwork for an initial public offering that could value the company at $1 trillion. Amazon said it would cut 14,000 corporate jobs, just days before its cloud unit posted its strongest growth in nearly three years.

These developments, along with earnings calls and interviews with executives, make clear that AI has cemented itself as the single biggest catalyst for global corporate investment and the engine of the market rally, even as some question the sustainability of both.

Spend thrift

Soaring revenue at Microsoft, Alphabet and other technology giants was expected. But more than 100 non-tech global companies noted data centers on quarterly calls this week, including Honeywell, turbine maker GE Vernova , and heavy equipment maker Caterpillar.

Sales in Caterpillar's division that supplies data centers jumped 31% in its most recent quarter. "We're definitely really excited about the prime power opportunity with data centers," CEO Joseph Creed said this week.

"The AI supply chain now spans power, industrials and cooling technology, and investors are looking at the entire ecosystem rather than just core tech," said Ayako Yoshioka, portfolio manager at Wealth Enhancement Group. Goldman Sachs estimates global AI-related infrastructure spending could reach $3 trillion to $4 trillion by 2030. Microsoft, Amazon, Meta and Alphabet are expected to spend roughly $350 billion combined this year.

AI investment is propping up global trade, with about 60% of US data-centre capex spent on imported IT equipment

AI investment is propping up global trade, with about 60% of U.S. data-center capex spent on imported IT equipment, according to Oxford Economics, much of it semiconductors from Taiwan, South Korea and Vietnam.

At least two dozen companies representing more than $21 trillion in combined market value reported quarterly earnings or spoke with Reuters about AI in recent days. Many, including Procter & Gamble and Boliden, noted that the hoped-for productivity gains, though uneven, are beginning to show. "We strongly believe the future contribution of artificial intelligence within R&D, within developing innovation, will steadily increase," Schindler CEO Paolo Compagna told Reuters, though he said AI's impact is yet to be seen. The Swiss lift and escalator maker raised its annual margin forecast last week. Year-over-year revenue growth in the U.S. tech sector is up more than 15%, outpacing all other sectors, according to LSEG data. Apple said it was significantly increasing AI investment and Amazon projected capital spending of $125 billion in 2025.

Overvaluation worries

Since ChatGPT's debut in 2022, global equity values have climbed 46%, or $46 trillion. One-third of that gain has come from AI-linked companies, according to Bespoke Investment Group. Analysts warn of a quickening replacement cycle for servers, accelerators and chips as each new generation delivers exponential performance gains. The useful life of AI chips is shrinking to five years or less, forcing companies to "write down assets faster and replace them sooner," said UBS semiconductor analyst Tim Arcuri. The surge in AI-related spending has widened the gap between investment and returns, with a Reuters analysis showing that sales-to-capex ratios at major tech firms have fallen sharply as outlays on chips and data centers grow faster than revenue. Capital expenditures represent a larger chunk of cash generated by operating activities for some companies, causing some investor concern.

"If progress hasn't been made toward monetization within three years, the market will start asking hard questions," said Sumali Sanyal, senior portfolio manager at investment firm Xponance.

Microsoft reported a record $35 billion in capex in its most recent quarter and projected higher spending, prompting Bernstein analyst Mark Moerdler to ask whether the company was spending into a bubble. Microsoft Chief Financial Officer Amy Hood responded that AI-related demand still outpaces Microsoft's spending. "I thought we were going to catch up. We are not," she said. Some companies are financing AI projects with debt. Oracle's $18 billion bond sale last month was one of the largest ever for a tech company, and it looks set to be surpassed by an up to $30 billion bond sale from Meta Platforms. News of its largest ever bond sale knocked Meta's shares down 11% on Thursday.

Still, many economists say the AI cycle is far from exhausted. Goldman estimates AI investment is currently less than 1% of U.S. GDP, far below peaks of 2% to 5% seen during the electricity and dot-com booms.

"We are in the early innings ... and the pace of AI innovation is the fastest we have seen in decades," said Nick Evans, portfolio manager at Polar Capital Technology Trust. **Reuters**

Sam Altman says he's still waiting for his Tesla after 7.5 years, seeks refund

OpenAI founder and CEO Sam Altman on Friday claimed that he has been waiting more than seven years for a Tesla car he booked -- and still hasn't received it.

Altman said he paid $45,000 as a reservation fee for the electric vehicle but has now decided to ask for a refund from the Elon Musk-led company.

In a post on social media platform X, Altman shared three screenshots showing his email exchanges with Tesla.

The first screenshot confirmed his booking, while the second showed his email asking Tesla to cancel the order and issue a refund.

However, the third screenshot revealed that his refund request email bounced back, displaying an "address not found" error message. Sharing the screenshots, Altman captioned the post, "A tale in three acts." He added in a follow-up comment, "I really was excited for the car! And I understand delays. But 7.5 years has felt like a long time to wait."

The post quickly went viral, attracting thousands of reactions and comments. Among them was a playful response from Altman's brother, Jack Altman.

In a lighthearted tease, Jack shared Sam's photo with a quote reading, "Whether we burn $500 million, $5 billion, or $50 billion a year -- I don't care," and joked, "You can't be worrying about 50k like this." Sam replied to his brother's comment with humour, writing, "little brother energy is the WORST."

However, Tesla has not yet commented on Altman's post. Meanwhile, the Elon Musk-run firm started delivering standard Model Y to its customers in India last month. **IANS**

BITS & BYTES

Xi bats for global AI body

Chinese President Xi Jinping took centrestage at a meeting of APEC leaders on Saturday to push a proposal for a global body to govern artificial intelligence and position China as an alternative to the United States on trade cooperation.

The comments were the first by the Chinese leader on an initiative Beijing unveiled this year, while the United States has rejected efforts to regulate AI in international bodies.

Xi said a World Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Organization could set governance rules and boost cooperation, making AI a "public good for the international community". In remarks published by the Xinhua, Xi added, "Artificial intelligence is of great significance for future development and should be made for the benefit of people in all countries and regions." **Reuters**

Universal, Udio team up

Universal Music Group and AI song generation platform Udio have settled a copyright infringement lawsuit and agreed to team up on a new music creation and streaming platform, the two companies said in a joint announcement.

Universal and Udio said Wednesday that they reached a "compensatory legal settlement" as well as new licensing agreements for recorded music and publishing that will "provide further revenue opportunities" for the record label's artists and songwriters.

As part of the deal, Udio immediately stopped allowing people to download songs they've created, which sparked a backlash and apparent exodus among paying users.

The deal is the first since Universal, along with Sony Music Entertainment and Warner Records, sued Udio and another AI song generator, Suno, last year over copyright infringement. "These new agreements with Udio demonstrate our commitment to do what's right by our artists and songwriters," Universal CEO Lucian Grainge said. **AP**

Secure song

SongProof, a new blockchain-powered digital platform that allows singers, songwriters, composers and producers to instantly prove ownership of their music, is now available in India.

Hina Rizvi, an Indo-Canadian lawyer with years of experience in entertainment, intellectual property, and blockchain law, said she co-founded SongProof to ensure artists' rights are protected. It is designed for creators to receive a timestamped digital certificate tied directly to their song or lyrics, ensuring that with just a few clicks their work can not be stolen, altered or claimed by someone else. "Indian music powers cinema, streaming, and global culture — yet so many creators here still have no reliable way to protect their work," Rizvi said in a statement this week. "SongProof gives them that power — instant, undeniable proof that a song is theirs. In a country where copyright registration remains underused and alleged song theft widespread, SongProof represents a game-changer," she said. **PTI**

HEALTH TIP: If your nose feels sore or cracked, applying a small amount of natural oil such as coconut, sesame or vitamin E oil can help

Besides probiotics, miso is also rich in minerals, vitamins, and protein

Flavour favour

These dishes are subtle yet strong delight for your senses

GOSHT NIHARI

INGREDIENTS

For Nihari Masala

- Fennel seeds – 1 tsp
- Cumin seeds – 1 tsp
- Pomegranate seeds – 1 tsp
- Whole Cloves – 5
- Whole Black cardamom – 4
- Black peppercorns – 1 tsp
- Indian bay leaves – 2
- Cinnamon bark – 4 inches
- Star anise – 1 • Blade Mace – 1 • Kashmiri chili powder – 2 tsp
- Coriander powder – 2 tsp
- Ginger powder – ½ tsp
- Nutmeg powder – ¼ tsp

For Gosht Nihari

- Mutton (preferably shank or bone-in pieces) – 1 kg
- Large Onion, thinly sliced – 1
- Vegetable oil – 8 tbsp (or 4 tbsp oil + 4 tbsp ghee)
- Black cardamom – 1
- Green cardamom – 5
- Cinnamon bark – 1 piece (2 inches)
- Whole Kashmiri chilies – 1–2
- Prepared Nihari masala – as above • Kosher salt – 2 tsp
- Yogurt – 3 tbsp
- Water – 6 cups
- Whole wheat flour – 3 tbsp
- Fresh ginger, julienned – 1 inch

METHOD

- eat a small skillet over medium-low heat. Add cinnamon bark, star anise, and black cardamom. Toast until fragrant.
- Add fennel seeds, black peppercorns, cumin seeds, and cloves. Toast for 30 seconds.
- Cool, then grind with mace, pomegranate seeds, and Indian bay leaves into a powder.
- Mix in Kashmiri chili powder, coriander powder, ginger powder, and nutmeg powder.
- Heat 6 tbsp oil in a Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add sliced onion and cook until browned.
- Add whole spices (black cardamom, green cardamom, cinnamon bark, Kashmiri chilies) and cook for 30 seconds.
- Add mutton and nihari masala; cook until meat changes color.
- Add salt, half the yogurt; cook 1 minute. Add remaining yogurt; cook 1 minute.
- Add 6 cups water; simmer on low heat for 2–3 hours (or pressure cook for 25–30 minutes).
- Mix whole wheat flour with water; add to pot. Simmer 10–15 minutes until thickened.
- Garnish with julienned ginger, coriander leaves, and lemon wedges.
- Serve hot with naan, paratha, or steamed rice

LAZZEZ PASILIYAN

INGREDIENTS

- Lamb ribs (or mutton ribs), cut into pieces – 500 gm
- Ghee or vegetable oil – ¼ cup
- Large onion, finely chopped – 1 large
- Ginger-garlic paste – 2 tbsp
- Kashmiri red chili powder – 1 tsp
- Coriander powder – 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder – ½ tsp
- Garam masala powder – ½ tsp
- Black pepper powder – ½ tsp
- Thick yogurt, whisked – 1 cup
- Coconut milk (optional, for richness) – ½ cup
- Salt – to taste
- Lemon juice – 2 tbsp
- Chopped coriander leaves (for garnish) – 2 tbsp
- Kasuri methi, crushed (optional)- 1tsp

METHOD

- In a bowl, mix lamb ribs with yogurt, ginger-garlic paste, Kashmiri chili powder, coriander powder, turmeric, garam masala, salt and black pepper. Marinate for at least 1 hour (or overnight for best results).
- Heat ghee/oil in a heavy-bottomed pan (or pressure cooker). Add chopped onions; sauté until golden brown.
- Add marinated lamb ribs. Sear on medium-high heat until browned (~5 mins).
- Reduce heat to low. Add kasuri methi (if using) and coconut milk (if using). Simmer covered for 30–40 mins in a pan (or 15 mins in a pressure cooker) until lamb is tender.
- Add lemon juice. Adjust salt and spices as needed.
- Garnish with coriander leaves. Serve hot with naan, roti, or steamed rice

Pair with Naan, Rumali Roti, or cumin-flavored basmati rice.

KALMI KEBAB

INGREDIENTS

For Marination

- Chicken drumsticks- 500 gm
- Thick yogurt (hung curd or Greek yogurt)- 1 cup
- Ginger - Garlic paste- 2 tbsp
- Lemon juice- 2 tbsp
- Red chili powder- 1 tsp
- Cumin powder- 1 tsp
- Coriander powder - 1 tsp
- Garam masala- 1 tsp
- Salt - to taste
- Cashew nut paste (optional) - 2 tbsp
- Fresh cream- 2 tbsp

For Cooking

- Oil or ghee - for brushing
- Fresh coriander leaves- for garnish
- Green chutney- for serving

METHOD

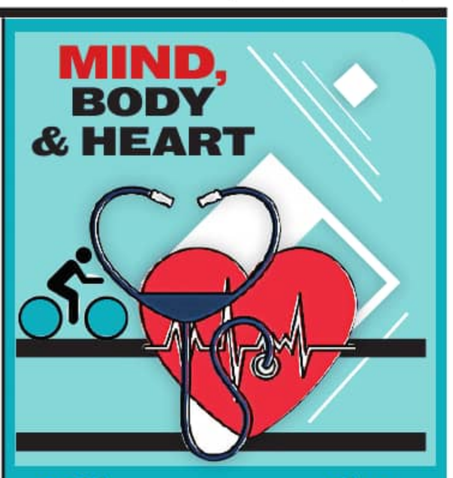
- In a bowl, mix yogurt, ginger-garlic paste, lemon juice, red chili powder, cumin powder, coriander powder, garam masala, salt, cashew nut paste (if using) and fresh cream until smooth.
- Add chicken drumsticks, ensuring they're fully coated. Marinate for at least 2 hours or overnight for deeper flavors.
- Soak wooden skewers in water for 2-3 hours if grilling.

Cooking Options

Tandoor

- Preheat tandoor 450 C .
- Grill drumsticks for 15-20 minutes per side until cooked through and charred.
- Serve hot with green chutney, salad, naan, or tandoori roti.
- Garnish with fresh coriander leaves, onion rings, and lemon wedges.

Recipes by chef Yunus Khan, Visiting Chef, Courtyard by Marriott Bengaluru Hebbal



All you need to know about...

Eating chocolate, berries

Helps boost memory

Struggling with memory and stress issues? A bite of dark chocolate or a handful of berries may help boost your memory levels and also cut down stress, according to an animal study.

Courtesy, flavanols

The improved memory and cognition may be due to flavanols, found abundantly in cocoa and berries, said the team from Shibaura Institute of Technology, Japan.

The study, published in the journal Current Research in Food Science, demonstrated that flavanol intake can trigger wide-ranging physiological responses resembling those induced by exercise -- functioning as a moderate stressor that activates the central nervous system and enhances attention, arousal, and memory. Flavanols also protect against neuronal damage.

How it affects nervous system

"Stress responses elicited by flavanols in this study are similar to those elicited by physical exercise. Thus, moderate intake of flavanols, despite their poor bioavailability, can improve the health and quality of life," said Dr. Yasuyuki Fujii from the Shibaura Institute. In the study, the team investigated how flavanols affect the nervous system through sensory stimulation. They tested the hypothesis that the astringent taste -- a dry, puckering, rough, or sandpapery sensation in the mouth -- of flavanols may act as a direct signal to the brain.

Neurotransmitter activity

Flavanols enhanced neurotransmitter activity across several brain regions. Dopamine and its precursor levodopa, norepinephrine, and its metabolite normetanephrine were elevated in the brain immediately after the administration.These chemicals regulate motivation, attention, stress response, and arousal. In addition, biochemical analysis revealed higher urinary levels of catecholamines -- hormones released during stress -- as well as increased activity in the hypothalamic paraventricular nucleus (PVN), a brain region central to stress regulation.

—IANS

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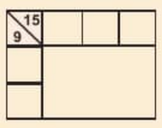
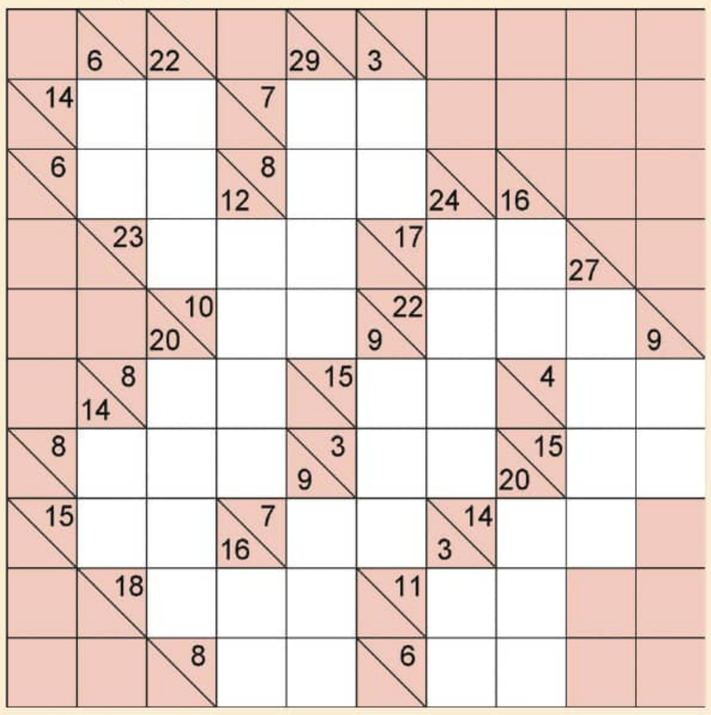
facebook.com/theBangaloremirror
@BangaloreMirror

Kakuro

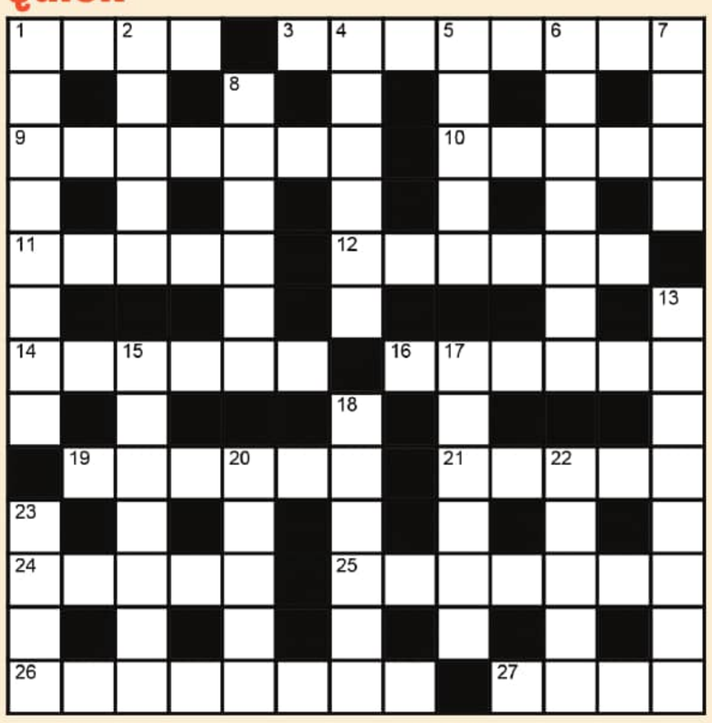
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 Dollar (4)
3 Protected, defended or concealed? (8)
9 Karnataka district known for its trekking trails (7)
10 Survived (5)
11 Cages for keeping poultry (5)
12 Over-affectionate (6)
14 Lay open to view (6)
16 Energetic; in motion (6)
19 Enmity or aversion (6)
21 Paved courtyard (5)
24 Bring together (5)
25 ____ in : interrupted, contributed money etc.? (7)
26 His ____ : formal address for the king? (8)
27 __ __ example : e.g. ? (2,2)

DOWN

1 Cut in half (8)
2 Egyptian capital (5)
4 Accumulates by skimping? (6)
5 Showy actions (5)
6 Dan Brown's __ ___ Code? (2,5)
7 Extinct bird (4)
8 Persons in authority (6)
13 Obliged (8)
15 ____ in : bringing gradually into use? (7)
17 Copper in combined form at higher oxidation state (6)
18 Orders or decrees (6)
20 Man-made fibre (5)
22 Records (5)
23 Grant or Laurie of Hollywood (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: E EQUALS O

JOEFMO N MEEI IGNH LU JEE UJQNCMG JE DG DGHLGPGI, CEJOLCM LU JEE UJQNCMG JE ONPG ONSSGCGI.

Linemaro

Aside from looking beautiful, what do you do for a living?

Mindchow

It is not the want, but rather abundance that creates avarice

Joke of the day

There is no pleasure in having nothing to do; the fun is in having lots to do and not doing it

Loop

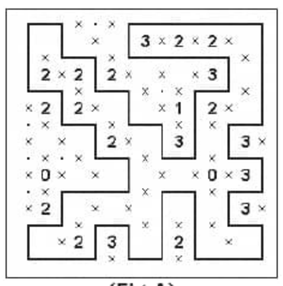
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

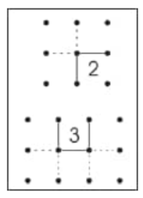
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

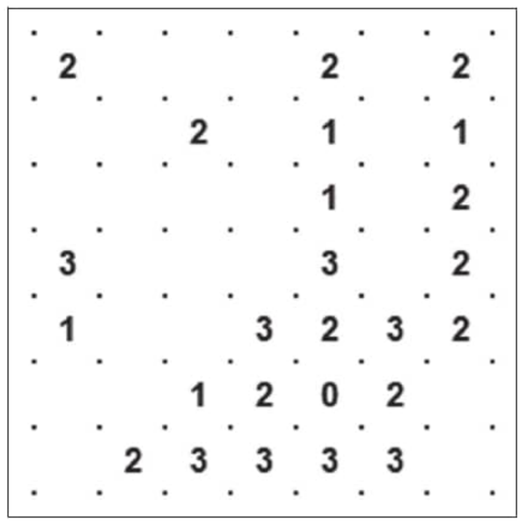
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



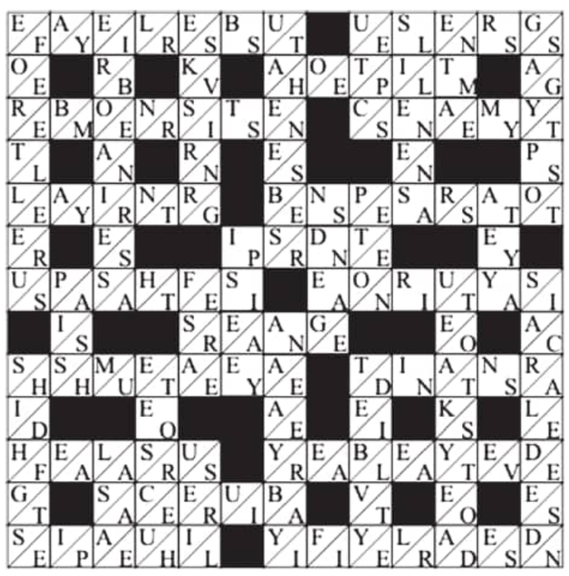
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9			K	

ACROSS

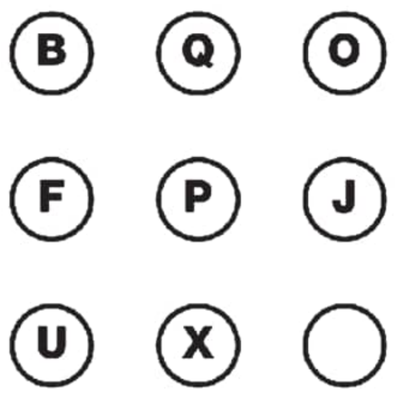
1 Stray; 6 Voila; 7 Spear; 8 Hides; 9 Stick

DOWN

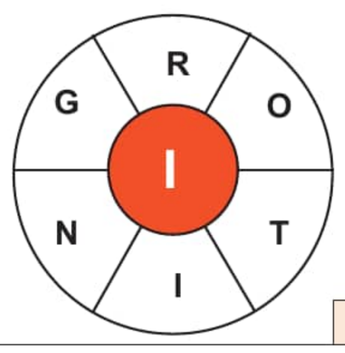
1 At vas; 2 Irish; 3 Optic; 4 Keels; 5 As dry

Mensapuzzle

Which letter replaces the blank and completes the puzzle?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

10 Average; **12** Good; **14** Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

	9			3		1		8
		6				4		
			1					5
1	5		2	9		8		
	6			4			2	
		4		5	3		1	7
6					2			
		1				2		
9		7		8			5	

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 15

3 4 5 9

Medium = 9

1 7 7 8

Hard = 3

4 7 8 6

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

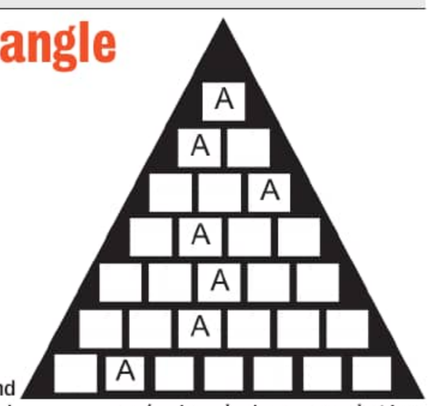
Differences: 1. Remote is longer. 2. TV screen is smaller. 3. Leaf is added to plant. 4. Hair is different. 5. Sleeve is longer. 6. Collar is different.

Riddler

I grow in trees, eat living things but have no teeth and give birth to something that looks nothing like me. What am I?

Alpha triangle

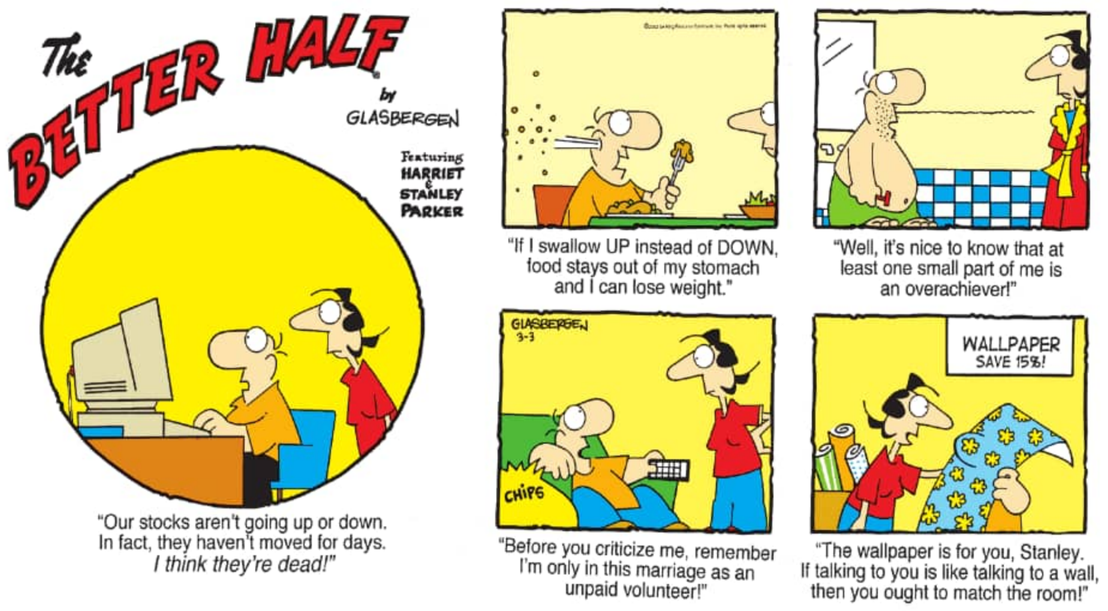
1 First letter
2 _ easy _ a pie
3 Vast water body
4 Low
5 Boyfriends
6 Functional
7 Trinkets



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
Featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
"Our stocks aren't going up or down. In fact, they haven't moved for days. I think they're dead!"
"If I swallow UP instead of DOWN, food stays out of my stomach and I can lose weight."
"Well, it's nice to know that at least one small part of me is an overachiever!"
GLASBERGEN 3-3
CHIPS
"Before you criticize me, remember I'm only in this marriage as an unpaid volunteer!"
WALLPAPER SAVE 15%!
"The wallpaper is for you, Stanley. If talking to you is like talking to a wall, then you ought to match the room!"

FLASH GORDON
I AM AURA, PRINCESS OF MONGO.
MY FATHER IS -- WAS -- A TYRANT. HEARTLESS. WASHED IN SEAS OF INNOCENT BLOOD.
I HAVE VOWED TO BE DIFFERENT. TO BE GOOD.
IT JUST... DOESN'T COME NATURALLY.
I FOUGHT A WAR AGAINST MY FATHER. I EXECUTED A PLAN THAT MAY HAVE KILLED HIM.
HE HAUNTS MY THOUGHTS, BOTH DEAD AND ALIVE.
HOW STRANGE IT FEELS TO SAY TO MYSELF, "AURA, YOU HAVE OVERTHROWN YOUR FATHER."
THE FUTURE OF MONGO IS IN OUR HANDS NOW:
PRINCE THUN OF THE LION MEN
PRINCE VULTAN OF THE HAWK MEN
QUEEN FRIA OF FROZEN FRIGIA
AND IN THE MIDDLE OF IT ALL?
FLASH GORDON, AN ALIEN WARRIOR FROM A WORLD CALLED EARTH.
WE WILL RULE AS A COLLECTIVE, CONSOLIDATING OUR POWER THROUGH A MARRIAGE BETWEEN ME AND PRINCE BARIN, MONGO'S RIGHTFUL KING.
BUT WHAT MY ALLIES DO NOT KNOW IS THAT BARIN IS MISSING IN ACTION.
IF THEY FIND OUT, THIS FRAGILE PEACE MAY BREAK.
THERE IS NO ONE I CAN TRUST TO FIND HIM.
NO ONE... EXCEPT FLASH GORDON.
DAN SCHKADE 11-12-23
THE GOOD PERSON I SO BADLY WANT TO BE.
NEXT: THE LADY FROM EARTH

WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

If it's your birthday today

Expect a career shift towards more creative, fulfilling work, which significantly boosts your income. Finances stabilise after an early-year setback; budget well to avoid impulsive large purchases. Love requires understanding and patience, especially around the summer months. Your family is a constant source of calm and powerful renewal.

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20

You're choosing optimism over bitterness, turning challenges into celebration. A brunch with friends uplifts your spirit. Enjoy small pleasures but stay mindful; set a spending limit to balance joy with responsibility.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20

Clarity returns, revealing your ambitions and desires. What you seek lies within reach, waiting for action. Make a plan, set priorities, and take confident steps; momentum will bring powerful transformation.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21

Say yes to bold adventures without waiting for perfection. Let curiosity replace hesitation. Every risk brings growth, and embracing the unknown today may lead to experiences more beautiful than imagined.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23

Reflect on past decisions without regret. Mistakes shaped your wisdom. Take responsibility, forgive yourself, and step forward with purpose. Each lesson strengthens your resolve to create a fulfilling, authentic future.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23

Craving excitement, you may experiment with style or fitness. Change re-energises your spirit, but avoid impulsive choices. Follow what makes you feel alive, and your confidence will naturally shine through.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23

Spiritual insight brings peace and understanding. You're learning to release the past gracefully, grateful for its lessons. Appreciate your journey; it has shaped your resilience, perspective, and the calm strength you radiate now.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22

Cherish those who remain loyal during challenges. Their support reflects genuine love. Express gratitude and nurture these soulful bonds; they form your true foundation and remind you of what really matters.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22

You're aligning with divine timing and trusting the flow. Blend innovation with experience in your work. Stepping beyond comfort zones sparks creativity and opens unexpected, rewarding opportunities guided by intuition.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22

Accept your present moment fully; it's rich with growth. Flexibility fuels your progress. In love, release emotional walls and invite genuine connection. Life expands beautifully when you approach it with openness.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20

Slow down and prioritise healing. Intensity eases when you nurture yourself. Meditation, journaling, and wholesome meals help restore balance. Quiet reflection today renews clarity for the next meaningful chapter.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19

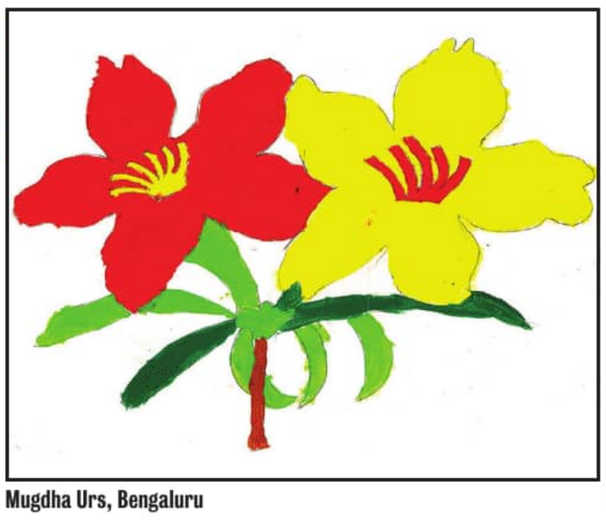
Conflicting thoughts arise between caution and creativity; balance both. Trust imagination while grounding your ideas. Channel inspiration into action, and success will follow when passion meets practical wisdom and courage.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20

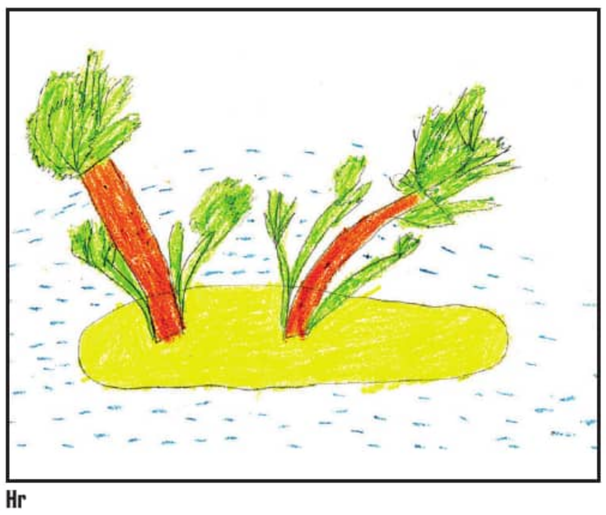
Celebrate the present with loved ones. Replace worry with gratitude. Uplifting routines, like rising early and embracing sunlight, boost vitality. Positive habits and joyful energy reshape your reality into something inspiring.

www.sundeepkochar.com

KIDZONE



Mugdha Urs, Bengaluru



Hr

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Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M

= 2 × 5⁻(2/2) / 4⁻(2/2) ÷ 5⁻(2/2) / 8⁻(2/2)
=. 2 x 5/4 ÷ 5/8
= 5/2÷5/8 = 5/2×8/5 = 4

BULL'S EYE

giro, girt, grin, grit, groin, trio, ingot, into, iron, origin, ring, riot, RIOTING, tiring,

RIDDLER A bird. They are hatched and raised in trees (nests), don't have teeth in the traditional meaning of teeth and they lay eggs, which look nothing like a bird. A butterfly / caterpillar could also work.

FAST FIVE

A	R	T	S	Y
V	I	O	L	A
A	S	P	E	R
S	H	I	E	D
T	I	C	K	S

STRIKE OUT

F	A	I	R	E	S	T	■	U	S	E	R	S		
E	R	K	■	H	O	P	I	T	■	A				
E	B	O	N	I	T	E	■	S	E	A	M	Y		
L	■	N	■	N	■	S	■	N	■	S				
E	Y	I	N	G	■	E	S	P	A	R	T	O		
R	■	E	■	I	S	N	T	■	E	■				
S	A	S	H	E	S	■	A	O	R	T	A	S		
S	H	U	T	E	Y	E	■	D	I	A	N	A		
I	■	O	■	A	■	E	■	S	■	L				
T	■	S	C	R	U	B	■	V	■	E	■	D		
F	E	A	R	S	■	R	E	L	A	T	E	D		
E	■	R	■	S	■	C	■	E	■	E				
S	P	A	H	I	■	Y	I	E	L	D	E	D		

QUICK

B	U	C	K	■	S	H	I	E	L	D	E	D		
I	■	A	■	B	O	■	C	■	A	■	O			
S	H	I	M	O	G	A	■	L	I	V	E	D		
E	■	R	■	S	■	A	■	I	■	O				
C	O	O	P	S	■	D	O	T	I	N	G	■		
T	■	E	■	S	■	A	C	T	I	V	E	■		
E	X	P	O	S	E	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
D	■	H	■	E	■	P	A	T	I	O	■	■		
H	A	T	R	E	D	■	P	A	N	A	C	■		
H	■	S	■	A	■	I	■	R	■	L	■	■		
U	N	I	F	Y	■	C	H	I	P	P	E	D		
G	■	N	■	O	■	T	■	C	■	E	■	E		
I	G	H	N	E	S	S	A	S	A	N	■	■		

MENSA PUZZLE

C. In each row, the centre letter equals the sum of the left and right letters.

QUOTE UNCODE

Though a good deal is too strange to be believed, nothing is too strange to have happened.

SUDOKU

5	9	2	4	3	6	7	8	1
3	1	6	5	7	8	4	9	2
4	7	8	1	2	9	3	6	5
1	5	3	2	9	7	8	4	6
7	6	9	8	4	1	5	2	3
2	8	4	6	5	3	9	1	7
6	3	5	9	1	2	7	8	4
8	4	1	7	6	5	2	3	9
9	2	7	3	8	4	6	5	1

ALPHA TRIANGLE

A, As, Sea, Base, Beaus, Usable, Baubles.

GO FIGURE

Easy
5 + 4 − 3 + 9 = 15
Medium
8 × 7 / 7 + 1 = 9
Hard
8 − 4 + 6 − 7 = 3

LOOP

KAKURO

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Song & sport
Singer Sunidhi Chauhan will delight the crowd with a medley of her biggest hits at the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 final to be played between India and South Africa in Navi Mumbai on Sunday

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Up for any challenge

Sonakshi takes us through physical challenges of playing a demon goddess

Sonakshi Sinha is now gearing up for her Telugu debut with Jatadhara. The film will also be released in Hindi. The actress plays Dhan Pishachini in the film, and her look has become a huge talking point. Sonakshi is brimming with excitement as ETimes gets into a chat with her.

When you point out the recent variety in her projects, be it ,Heeramandi', 'Dahaad', or now this — she laughs, "I'm just keeping everyone guessing and on their toes," further adding, "Now, 15 years into the industry, I'm making my Telugu debut, so it's exciting."

Opening up on what made her choose this role, Sonakshi says, "It was actually, again, venturing into the unknown for me because I've never done anything like this in my career of 15 years. When they offered it to me, our producer, Prerna Arora, called me and said, 'I have this role for you — it's of a pishachini, the demon goddess of wealth.' And I was like, wow, this sounds different and very exciting. That's when I went in and heard the narration, and when I did, I was like, yo, this is nothing I have ever imagined myself doing, ever. So I had to do it..."

The actress also revealed that this film was the most physically challenging one she has done. "The most challenging part was actually how physically demanding it was. It used to take me three hours to get ready and go on set. I used to wear that saree, and underneath it, a harness. Then there was around 50 kilos of jewellery on me, and they had to stitch every piece onto me so that it wouldn't move during the action sequences. I used to be suspended in the air for half the day, and it was very painful. So, physically, it was very challenging for me, more than anything else. But the atmosphere on set, the people there, they were all so warm and welcoming, and always ready to help. Not once did they make me feel like I'd come from somewhere else, that I wasn't part of this industry..."

—ETimes

Sandhya Mridul slams anti-ageing trend

Actress Sandhya Mridul has taken to her social media account to share a video slamming those who praise anti-ageing procedures.

The actress, without mentioning anybody's name, said, "What is this chaos around anti-ageing? Are you God? Even God calls to himself those who overdo anti-ageing!" she said, subtly hinting at the medically risky procedures related to such treatments that have backfired in the past. "Don't talk nonsense! All these years, people spoke about fairness and skin creams.

Now it's anti-ageing. Will you take care of our hormones? No, right? It's natural—so sh** **p!" Earlier last week, the actress had taken to revealing how she has been losing out on offers and work due to a lack of 'sufficient social media followers'. She was heard saying, "Without holding back, Sandhya Mridul called out the casting industry and said, 'This is a new situation. If you don't have followers, you won't get a job."

The actress questioned, "If you don't give a job, how will you be famous? If you don't get followers, how will you be famous? It's a very difficult thing."

—IANS

Amy Schumer is enjoying how she looks

Hollywood actress Amy Schumer is celebrating how she feels amid her weight loss journey and revealed that she is feeling strong and herself.

The actress shared a carousel by thanking her team for styling her in a black and white dress, Schumer wrote: "I'm feeling strong and like myself."

She added: "I'm enjoying how I look but man it is all about how you feel. I'm so grateful to be pain free thanks to my trainer Mona at reload who has helped strengthen me since my back surgery and @seckinmd for lifting all the endometriosis' out of my body."

In the photos, Schumer poses around the house in a split black-and-white knee-length dress, complete with a plunging neckline and black pointed-toe pumps. She also wore a silky pale pink dress and posed in a lounge chair, reports people.com.

"@midihealth helping me navigate perimenopause and my psychologist. I got all dressed up and ready to go to my friends 50th and then decided I wasn't feeling up to it and wanted to stay home with my little guy. Thanks for all the love. Sending it right back," she concluded the caption.

The actress' post comes days after she posted a photo of her stomach in a mirror selfie.

"No filter, no filler, no clean mirror," she wrote alongside the image or her abs.

— IANS

Tussle between greed and honesty

Brat is a surprise package from director Shashank and hero Darling Krishna, who are known for romantic movies. With this film, they prove that they can handle other genres too. The director and hero deserve a pat on the back for the subject they chose - cricket betting - that highlights the adverse impact on gullible, ambitious and unemployed youths. The director has also aptly narrated how hapless girls get exploited.

The movie has two songs - Naane Neenanthe and Gangi Gangi. Naane Neenanthe, sung by Sid Sriram, is romantic while Gangi Gangi, sung by Harini Ivaturi and Sannidhanandan, is peppy. Music director Arjun Janya has done a fantastic job. Background music adds value to the movie.

The movie begins with a teacher coming to the police station to complain to Mahadevaiah (Achyuth Kumar), a head constable known for his honesty, against his son Krishna aka Kristy. The teacher tells Mahadevaiah that his son is a brat. At this juncture, the scene shifts to a spot where Kristy is seen playing cards along with his friends. Later, Kristy somehow passes PUC while his friends complete graduation. He opts for cricket betting to become rich. He meets Manisha (Manisha Kandkur) who considers herself unlucky due to some reason. His friends and he bet a huge amount on cricket and get cheated by Mani (Dragon Mani). He comes to know that police inspector Ravikumar (Ramesh Indira) is hand in glove with Mani. You have to watch the movie to know what happens to Kristy and Manisha and how Kristy comes around.

Darling Krishna has acted well. His dancing skills are praiseworthy. Manisha Kandkur looks glamorous but she needs to hone her acting skills. Ramesh Indira, as a corrupt police inspector, Achyuth Kumar, as an honest head constable, and Dragon Mani, as a menacing villain have given good support.

However, the ending is a bit confusing. The part where the police rush additional forces based on a complaint from a head constable is hard to digest.

The movie is worth a watch for Darling Krishna's fans.

—Y Maheswara Reddy

BRAT
3.0 RATING ★★★☆☆
- **DIRECTOR** Shashank
- **ACTORS** Darling Krishna, Manisha Kandkur, Achyuth Kumar, Ramesh Indira, Dragon Manju
- **Duration** 155 minutes
- **Certification** U/A